

Munro's Ten Cent Novels



The Red Light on the Cliff.

GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER, 84 Beekman Street, N. Y.

The Central News Co., Philadelphia, Pa.

is wishing Books, will please order MUNRO'S, and see that MUNRO is on the cover.

Americana issued August

813

M926

207

TEN CENT NOVEL, 208.

:0:

QUEEN LIGHTNING,

A Tale of the Cross Timbers.

By the author of the "Rocky Mountain Hunters," "The Dacotah Chief," &c., &c.

THIS brilliant Indian story more than sustains the reputation its gifted author acquired by his previous work. It is not a dull page or passage in the whole book. The renowned Indian chiefs that ever trod our Western plains—savage followers, engaged in fierce and terrific wars—on each other, sometimes on our troops, but oftener alas!—bringing desolation and sorrow among peaceful settlements—to pass in review before us.

Some very interesting "affairs of the heart" do not fail both to please and profit our young people. Chapter on "Indian Justice" will be of im-



The Red Light on the Cliff;

OR,

The Invisible Hermit

—:O:—

BY LEVIN C. TEES.

—:O:—



—:O:—

GEORGE MUNRO, PUBLISHER,

84 BEEKMAN STREET, NEW YORK.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1871, by

GEORGE MUNRO,

**In the Office of the Librarian of Congress,
Washington, D. C.**

UPB

THE RED LIGHT ON THE CLIFF.

CHAPTER I.

PLOTTING.

A LONG narrow rocky shore extending for many miles along the coast of California, and, in the immediate back ground, a long succession of frowning cliffs and precipices.

This shore, black and desolate as it was, had many inhabitants, and their numbers were being daily augmented, for gold had lately been found in the locality, and as the smell of blood is to wild beasts, so is the cry of gold to men. Hundreds, nay thousands, both of the promising and unpromising young men of the eastern cities and villages came flocking here to seek that which would render their future lives easy and luxurious. Many a farm, and many a workshop lost the strong arms and crafty brains, without which the business had to be discontinued. Many a professional calling, even the ministry lost its professors. Everybody was mad! stark staring mad! And the madness took the form of an inordinate, unsatisfiable longing for gold.

Sons forsook their happy peaceful homes, that had sheltered them from infancy, to come out to this new uncultivated country and exchange their comforts for privations, and the safety of their homes for a land where murder was an every day occurrence, and robbery was a thing to be hourly expected.

They left sisters and sweethearts, to roam in a country where the face of a woman was a rarity, and, when a woman was seen, she was too often found belonging to that class of females who are a blight to civilized society. They left the kind parents who had always cared for them in their childhood, and now prayed (oh

so fervently prayed) for them in the early flush of their young, healthy, adventurous, and ambitious manhood.

And they needed every prayer that their parents offered to Heaven in their behalf. Temptation beset them on every hand. Beset them, did I say? No, beset is too tame a word to convey my meaning. They were forced into temptation. A young man might go out there whose life had been as pure as the new fallen snow, and whose reputation was as bright as the noon-day sun, and in a few years the chances were he would return drunken and worthless, the sorrow and mortification of his family, and the pest and fear of his neighbors.

However the majority of those who sailed for the land of gold did not possess lives so pure and stainless, nor reputations so intact. The adventures here, like the adventures in most enterprises, were made mostly from the most vile and the lowest classes of society—that is, lowest in their morals—of course the poor could not attain means to perform the journey. Many a young man was supplied with means to carry him to California by his friends, who had become disheartened and sickened by his conduct in the East, so they shipped him to this lawless place, where he would stand a better opportunity of getting murdered in some drunken fight, or where perhaps he might fall in the grasp of that severe judge—"Judge Lynch."

George Gibson was a good sample of this latter class of men who flocked to California, in the days of her early prosperity. Gibson was a wild, reckless boy, and he still retained those characteristics when he grew to manhood. His father was dead, or, at least, he supposed he was, for he had not seen him since he was ten years old. His uncle, as kind-hearted an uncle as ever breathed, took charge of him when his father abdicated that trust, but he soon found he had taken charge of trouble, and many months had not elapsed ere the uncle proclaimed his nephew to be a "nuisance."

So George was incorrigible. Praying did no good; kind words fell on his deaf ear. On reaching manhood, his uncle, thinking to reform him, took him into partnership, but George soon brought the affairs of the firm to a crisis, and he was paid liberally to leave it.

The war between Mexico and the United States happening about that time, he was prevailed upon to enter

the army and try to get shot. He went to war, but he did not get shot.

No men like him get do shot in the flower of their manhood.

When George returned from the army, he was ten times worse than when he entered it. But there was one stone yet unturned in trying to effect his reformation or dissolution, and that stone was California.

And George was as glad to get to the land of golden promises as his friends were glad to get rid of him.

"I do not expect to find any gold," said George Gibson to himself, as he first landed in California. "I am not fool enough for that. But there are more ways than one of getting rich in a country like this. I am resolved to return a rich man and I'll be one, even if I have to walk through the blood of my victims to accomplish my ends."

After staying a few weeks in San Francisco, he found he could not get rich in the city, so he retired to the country with some other ruffians, nearly as bad as himself, partly for the purpose of gold digging, but mostly to rob those industrious and sound-minded persons who had already established farms in this far-off uncivilized outlived country.

The spot where they had located their claims and built their hut, in which they ate, drank slept, and gambled, was quite a romantic one. It was situated in a beautiful valley, the grass of which was mostly green, for in that snowless country the greenness seldom fades (except in the minds of its inhabitants. The greenness here fades with a velocity that is astonishing); and the giant trees that grew in clusters everywhere, often burdened with fruit that would water the mouth of the daintiest, combined to give the place a look of paradise. But this was offset by the frowning, grim-looking rocks and precipices that looked down on every side and from everywhere. There is no escaping from those mountainous rocks; place yourself where you will, you can always see them. They are handy like the ocean and the farms, the roads and the valleys. Stiff, ponderous, proud affairs they are as they hold their white-capped heads far up to the blue heavens. They were no doubt made for a good purpose but they have long answered a bad end. Every secret crevice, every suspicious cavern has long been a lurking-place for red-handed, bloody-

mind, cruel and treacherous robbers. Many an honest miner, while unsuspectingly traversing the roads that led through the mountains, and heavily laden with the gold he had worked hard enough to gain, (Heaven knows) was suddenly beset by these miscreants, and, before he could raise an arm to defend his life, or offer to Heaven one prayer for his soul, he was stricken dead, barbarously mutilated and robbed.

Those were fearful days to live in, and none but brave men could endure the perils that beset everyday life in California twenty years ago.

The hut where Gibson and his confederates dwelt was quite a rude affair being built, but for the exigencies of the moment, and was a good sample of the miner's hut. It was built of pine boards and rafters. The rafters were rude ones, being constructed by the miners themselves from the neighboring trees, while the boards had been conveyed from the East, as at that time it was cheaper to pay their freights than have them sawed in their native land. The hut was not much over twelve feet in length, while the tallest miner could reach the roof, by standing on the tips of his toes and stretching his arm upward. The floor was furnished by nature, and the table was also a present from that good-natured individual, though a little improved upon by man, being the stump of a giant tree, that had been hewn down to make room for the miner's residence, and covered with a platform of rough boards. The seats, the owners invariably carried with them, (I hope no ladies will read this book; little boys hide it from your sisters,) and the windows and the doors were one. When the door was shut, the light came down the chimney, which was built of stone, and stood in the opposite side of the room from the door. It had a noble fire place, and it was a grand sight on a winter's night, when a fierce fire on its broad hearth would send its red glow all about the room, over the floor, and over the rafters and illuminate the opposite door; then turning to the middle of the room, it would glow on the excited faces of the hut's rough occupants intent on some game of cards.

For playing cards was their only diversion. It seemed to be all that they lived for. All day, while at work, they would talk of the games that would be played during the coming night. And all night long, often far into the morning, the exciting games would continue.

A characteristic set of faces did they present as they gathered round their rough gaming table. Faces often bloated with strong drink; faces covered with hair so short and stubby-looking that it seemed ashamed to grow in such a sinful place. A rough, haggard crowd; noisy and excited; cursing each other with such fearful oaths, that it seemed a wonder the ground didn't open and swallow them up.

George Gibson, though he was the youngest of these men, was far the worst among their number. He could outswear them, out-talk them and he was what is known as the "bully" of them all. In fact, he was their acknowledged leader.

In person, he was rather prepossessing, as regarded finish and regularity of features, but a sinister leer that could always be seen in the corners of his dark eyes, warned all beholders that this handsome man was not as good as he looked. His age was, perhaps, five and twenty, or a little over, but he had mingled much with bad, dangerous men, and this had given him an alert, self-defensive air, which made him look perhaps older than he really was. He was rather above the middle height, and well-proportioned to his height. His dress was rather a fantastic one, but was in perfect keeping with those worn by his companions, and gave him the appearance of a Ku-Klux or an Italian brigand. Coat, he had none, but that deficiency was supplied by a large grey cloak, that reached nearly down to his heels, and concealed a rough, red, flannel shirt; a pair of black pants that had evidently seen service; a long belt strapped around his waist, and stuck full of murderous-looking weapons—four pistols and a long steel knife; and the tops of his heavy cow-skin boots. His hat was also brigandish, being comical in shape, and ornamented with a bright colored feather, and as his face had remained unshaven for many days, he had quite a savage look, which nearly obliterated the general beauty of his features.

One night, while the wind howled fearfully around the little hut, often driving the smoke down the chimney, into the interior, thereby causing a volley of oaths to issue from the mouths of the inmates—and while the inmates themselves were engaged at their usual nightly avocations, a conversation occurred that led to the events that form the narrative of this little

which will, of course, be interesting to the general reader.

"There," said George Gibson, throwing down a pack of cards, and leaving the table, "I'll play no more this night. Bad luck, a curse on it, I say, has been following me ever since I set a foot in this infernal country. But it's all your fault, we'd have been rich men all of us, if you' have followed my advice. No, curse your cowardly hearts, you're afraid to take a hand in any game but a game of cards."

"We're afraid Judge Lynch might want to try a game," said Fred Rodgers, the fat man of the gang. "No, no, Gibson, when I get hung, I want to be hung by a decent judge and jury, not by a wild, infernal, tempestuous crowd."

"Oh, hanging! that's all you think of, you cowardly, overgrown bloat," said Gibson, turning fiercely on him, "when I was a little schoolboy, I had more courage in me than ten men like you have got."

"But Gibson," said another of the men, "look at the probability of our ever getting a penny from the adventure. Did any man even hear of a ship ever approaching that shore?"

"I did," said one of the oldest miners, who had been silent for some time. "I not only heard of a ship doing such a thing, but I saw her do it. I never saw a vessel come nearer being wrecked than that vessel was. Why, she came so near, that we on the shore could clearly see the men on board of her."

"Well, and wasn't she recked?" asked one.

"No, she was miraculously saved. It is a wonderful story, but none of you will believe me, so there is no use of me telling it."

"Oh, yes, tell the story!" exclaimed all, except Gibson.

"I expect it is one of his ghost stories, fit to frighten little children. Well, it will just do for you."

"Never mind, Gibson," said Fred Rodgers, "he will growl. Tell your story. It will just suit such a night as this."

"It will be just five years ago," said the miner, drawing near the fireplace, where a bright log fire was blazing and the others gathered around him and listened attentively, "since I was one of a gang who tried the same adventure as Gibson wants us to try to-night. We had

been mining a little to the north from this place, and business proving dull, as it is with us, we determined to gain money by foul means, as we could not by fair. So, on one stormy night, while the wind was howling as fiercely as it is to-night, and was blowing toward the coast, as it now is, twelve of us started for the light-house, to capture it and put out the lights. We did so. The keeper, at first, made some resistance, but he was soon conquered and securely bound. The lights were soon doused, then we waited for some unlucky vessel that might approach the dangerous coast."

"Did one arrive?"

"Yes, we had not to wait long. The white sails of a vessel were soon seen approaching the shore, sailing on in supposed safety, and soon the vessel herself was seen. Nearer and nearer she came, till we could see the forms of her crew. In five minutes more she would reach the hidden rocks, then destruction would be her doom and the plunder would be ours."

"Now for her miraculous rescue."

"You shall hear it: Just at the moment when we thought her bows would strike, and as we expected the noble vessel to shiver and sink, her course was altered, and she was soon sailing out again toward the open sea."

"Impossible! Could they have discovered land in the darkness?"

"No! We soon found to what they owed their salvation. Far off in the background, on one of the highest and steepest of the cliffs, we discovered a bright red light burning. It was the most brilliant light that I have ever seen. The whole surrounding scenery was illuminated. The light seemed to proceed from a monstrous lantern, and by the side of the lantern stood an unearthly figure, as calm and still as the cliff on which he stood. When the vessel disappeared in the distance, the red light also disappeared, but not before. Yes, my men, that vessel owed her safety, and her crew owed their lives to 'The Red Light on the Cliff.'"

"A wonderful story," said Gibson, scornfully, "but pray did you ever find who the individual was who stood so firmly by the Red Light?"

"No! nor mortal man will ever know who he is!" said the miner, solemnly. "He does not belong to this earth. By the Indians here about he is called the

'Flying Shadow,' but the oldest settlers call him 'The Invisible Hermit,' because it is supposed he dwells in those mountains, but he has never yet been seen by light of day. His name is a terror to the children, and Indians shun the cliff where he is only seen. Travelers passing that locality at night, have heard strange noises, seeming to proceed from the bottom of the mountain, but no man has ever yet had courage to approach that cliff, where, in a stormy night, when the vessels are in danger, the Red Light, and its mysterious sentinel, are often seen."

"Pooh, a good story for children," replied Gibson, "but I hope we are all men enough to laugh at such folly. I for one, scorn the Red Light, and the Invisible Hermit, as he is called. Let him try any of his tricks around George Gibson, and he'll receive an ounce of lead for his pains. I ask you all, for the third and last time, will any of you help me with this wrecking enterprise. Remember we have been here three months, and we have not gained gold enough to buy one of us a house, while by my plan, in one night's work, we may fall upon some gold-laden vessel, and to-morrow we can start for our homes independently rich."

"But Gibson," asked one of them named Johnson, "How are we to capture the light-house? Remember, Kingsley, the new keeper, is a staunch man, who would part with his best blood, ere he would surrender his important trust."

"Then if he is so obstinate, let him meet the fate of all obstinate fools, who prefer money to life. We'll try fair means, but if they fail let him beware."

"You would not commit murder!"

"Wouldn't I? ha! ha! my boy, if you could look on the inside of my conscience you could see how many dollars stood between me and blood. I've been scorned by my family—I've been forsook by my friends. I am an outcast and a wild and desperate one. What revenge could be sweeter, I ask, than to tinge the pride of my family, who look upon me as a wild beast, with the name of murderer. I've never dyed my hands with human blood yet," he continued; "but let that rubicon be once passed, let me commit one murder, and I'll crave, I'll pray for another victim!"

"You dishearten me," said Johnson, as he began pacing the floor of the hut. "I was on the point of volun-

teering with you, but this murderous language makes my blood shiver. I had no idea of coming here to California to get lynched."

"You need have no fear," said Gibson, trying to reassure them. "I won't proceed to extremities unless I am hardly pushed. Come, men, which of you have courage enough to join the enterprise?"

At first some of them seemed to join, but Gibson, like most men of his character, possessed good persuasive powers, united to the influence that a brave man always possesses over any class of rough, hardy men, and these gradually won an ascendancy over the wills of the others. So after the use of a little eloquence, and a little boasting and bullying, he found he had raised fourteen volunteers—in fact all in the hut to help him in his nefarious enterprise.

Their scheme was soon arranged. They were to go to the lighthouse; decoy the keeper outside, and then seize and bind him. The men were to wear masks, so they could not be detected by the keeper or his daughter, the only inmates of the light-house. After binding the keeper, they were to ascend to the light and put it out. Then there would be nothing to do but wait for the first ill-fated vessel that might approach that dangerous shore and be cast on those terrible hidden rocks, that lay concealed a few feet below the surface of the sea.

CHAPTER II.

THE LIGHT HOUSE.

THE light house on which the robbers had their villainous designs, was situated about a mile and a half to the west of the miners' cabin, and was approached by a rough, rocky road, which at times wound through dangerous passes, where the overhanging gigantic rocks, that hung from the hill sides, seemed to threaten a fall on the traveler underneath. At other times traversing fields, rich with cultivation and by nature, and pleasant

pasturages, beautiful by running brooks, and groves of fruit-bearing trees.

Of course the light house stood near the coast. Its foundations were laid on a firm rock, that stood a few feet from the water's edge, and when the wind was blowing in its direction—as it was on the night of our story—and with equal power, the furious waves were dashed up high against its weather-proof stone walls. It was indeed a dreary residence for two lonely people. On one side a boundless ocean, on the other a host of dark, frowning, forbidding mountains.

Yet the keeper and his daughter were not dreary. They were seldom visited by any persons (the nearest neighbors with whom they cared about associating lived nearly five miles distant, and of course, considering the state of the roads at that time, and the dangers of traveling, the families could not visit very often), but they found each other's company sufficient to while away the monotony of their solitary life.

The light house itself was like all light houses; a round, tower-like structure, but the keeper and his daughter lived in an attachment to it, or rather wing. This wing was a small square house, with only two rooms, one of which was a bed room on the upper floor, where Rebecca Kingsley, the keeper's daughter slept, and the other room on the lower floor was the kitchen, parlor, sitting-room, Mr. Kingsley's bed-room; in fact it answered many useful purposes.

It was quite a large room, considering the size of the house, and being always kept clean and neat by Rebecca, who was the tidiest housekeeper in the world, presented quite a comfortable appearance. The floor was covered with a rag carpet, at that time a great luxury in California, and the walls and ceilings were smoothly plastered and neatly whitewashed, another great luxury, considering the finish of the other walls of rooms in that wild country. The plastering had been done by Mr. Kingsley himself, who had learnt the trade in the East. Besides these comforts, there were the legitimate four-legged chairs and tables, the latter kept covered by snow white cloths, and a cupboard full of neat crockery ware; a small cooking-stove—another marvel—from which would daily issue sweet odors of the juicy meats that were cooking, together with vegetables of marvelous

size, that were raised in the little garden back of the house.

The shutters were bolted, the door was locked, and the supper table had been cleared away. The keeper had just returned to the little room from the light house, where he had been to trim the lamps, for it was a dark tempestuous night, and the lights required more vigilance than usual. On entering the room, he found his daughter sitting near one of the tables where a light was burning, busily engaged in sewing. He came and sat down near her, and presently opened a conversation.

A person would have been surprised had they been told this girl was the daughter of the man. He was dark-complexioned, while she was light. He had a bold, resolute, determined look, while she looked timid and coy; a frail flower, that could be destroyed by the first harsh breeze. He was a tall man, whose broad chest and well-proportioned body, the agile, firm-set limbs, and the grace and precision of his movements, betokened a strength that could wrestle with a number of ordinary men, and come off victorious; while the square chin, the compressed lips, and the dark, dauntless eyes, betokened equal strength of character.

The daughter, as we remarked, was the very opposite, both as regarded looks and disposition. She was rather under the medium height of women, but this seemed to add too, rather than detract from the beauties of her form.

Imagine her as she sat there on that stormy night, in that lonely house, the only hope, the only solace of her father. She had lowered her hair for the night, and it now hung in clusters—rich, golden clusters over her pure, white, stainless shoulders, that were plainly revealed, as she wore on that night, a dress that was very low in the neck. The pink dress that she wore well suited the lightness of her complexion, and hung in graceful folds around her perfect form. Her eyes were blue in color, and so pure, that the most hardened libertine living, could scarcely gaze in them and have a licentious thought at the time. Her hands were small and white, and as stainless as her face and neck, not showing even a single freckle. Her fingers were of a beautiful tapering shape, and a plain gold ring on one of them betokened the state of her heart. It was by speaking of this ring that her father opened the conversation.

"Rebecca," said he, drawing near her, and placing his arm around her slender shoulders, "my heart grows sick whenever I gaze upon that ring, and think how soon I shall be deprived of your society."

"No, dear father," she replied, as she laid her sewing on the table, and took her father's disengaged hand. "Don't say you will be deprived of my society, or I of yours. Rather say you will accompany George and I to New York, and leave this lonely desolate spot forever. You know George has accumulated means enough to supply all our wants, and he has expressed a wish to me, that you would accompany us, and make our home your own."

"I could never do that, dear," was the answer. "My proud spirit would never let me live on the wealth of another."

"But reflect, father, you have a claim on us."

"What claim have I, my daughter?"

"The claim of a parent over a child," she replied. "The claim of flesh and blood; the claim of the kindest father that ever carressed a daughter."

"It would be a brute of a father that wouldn't caress you," was the gallant reply, "but Rebecca, are you in a mood to hear a solemn communication this evening?"

"There is some of our friends dead?" she inquired, startled.

"No, the communication is nothing of that nature, but it is as bad as possible. It takes more the form of a story. A story that deeply concerns both you and me. Are you ready to listen?"

She replied that she was, and as they sat with their arms lovingly twined round each other, he proceeded with the following tale:

"About fifteen years ago, there resided in New York City, a journeyman mechanic, who had formed some very dissolute habits, the worst of which was drunkenness. He was, however, a good workman, and earned very remunerative wages. Though his days were generally spent at his work his nights were spent in the tavern or the gambling hell, or some other resort of the wicked.

"One night, while attending one of those companies known as "free and easies" that are held at many of large taverns in the principal cities, he was enraptured with the beauty of one of the singers.

"The singers in these places are mostly males, but this singer, by exception, was a female. She was a most beautiful woman, and though she had evidently mingled with the dissolute, yet her charms seemed fresh at thirty-five as they had been at fifteen. Her complexion was as light as yours, and indeed the form and features greatly resembled yours.

But a description of her is not my purpose. Enough to say, her beauty thoroughly entranced the dissolute mechanic.

That night he retired to his bed sober for the first time that month. Liquor seemed to have lost its charm over him for once. The next day he could not think—he could not speak of anything but the beautiful singer. That night found him again at the "free and easy," and on every succeeding night he visited the same place. At last his passion could be no longer restrained and he sought an introduction to the singer, which was soon granted. She soon learned to return his love, or at least he thought she did, and the two were soon on intimate terms.

He discovered his immorality did not live in very elegant lodgings, they being a small room in the fifth floor of a decayed tenement house. The room was uncommon small; one hardly large enough to comfortably seat a half a dozen persons. The windows had long ago lost their glass, and the rapacious landlord, who charged rent enough for the room, refused to resupply them. So they were stuffed with pieces of old dress or bed-clothes, or else covered, by pieces of newspaper being pasted over them. The room contained no furniture except an old bedstead, that had been sold and re-sold, time and time again; a small table, the worse of the wear, and a chair in the same condition. The floor had no carpet on it, and its rough, splintery boards proved dangerous to any who might venture in the room bare-footed.

Yet the beautiful singer managed to live in this room, and she did not live alone either. She was a widow, with one child. The child was a beautiful, sunny-headed little thing, and seemed to be the darling of every inmate of that tenement house. The mother was a wicked, drunken woman, yet she appeared to love this child dearly.

The mechanic and singer were at last married, and they lived together happily for some time. The me-

chanic had partly given up his evil courses, out of love for his wife, and she had done the same out of respect for him. His good wages soon placed his wife and her child in more comfortable circumstances, and they were finding the road to prosperity an easy one, when, alas for their bright prospects, they quarreled.

"Was the quarrel so serious a one?" asked Rebecca.

"To the contrary!" was the reply; "it was quite a trivial one. The husband has but spoken a few angry words when the wife's face turned to a terrible expression, and she bitterly cursed him. No kind words—no kind deeds, could pacify her. She swore she would be revenged on him, and that right soon."

She did take a revenge, and a terrible and unnatural one it was.

The husband had taken a fond liking for her child; in fact the child's natural father, had he possessed the kindest and most impressible of hearts, could not have loved the child more. The mother determined to break her husband's heart, by drowning her child and herself. She had no sooner formed the resolution than it was partly carried into effect.

That night of the quarrel, the husband and wife had retired earlier than usual to rest, and he had soon fallen into a sound sleep. What was his surprise on awaking, to find his wife and her child had left the bed, and were not in the room. He searched the house, but no traces of them could be found. Frantically he rushed into the street, questioning everybody he met if they had seen his child. But no one had seen her, and the poor man was most mad with fear that some terrible evil had befallen her. His trembling footsteps soon brought him to one of those great wharves, that are to be found lining the North River at New York City.

He had just passed on to one of these wharves, when he met a great strong man carrying a little child, whose clothes were dripping wet. Taking a hasty glance, as the man passed a neighboring lamp, he discovered her to be the child for whom he was searching. Of course he directly claimed her, and the stranger readily delivered her with an explanation.

He said that he had seen a woman leap into the river with this child in her arms. He immediately threw off his superfluous clothing and leaped in to the rescue. The woman had sank beyond his grasp, but sinking, she had released her hold on the child, and the man had

seized the little thing, as she rose for the third and last time.

The father wanted to reward the rescuer for this manly act, but he would take nothing. He however took a slip of paper and hastily wrote a few words on it, then handed it to the father, together with something that looked like a medal!

"Do you know what the writing was?"

"I do, but, instead of telling it to you, I will let you read it yourself."

"You will let me read it?"

"Yes, Rebecca," he said, as he took from his pocket an old-looking slip of paper and a small piece of brass about the size of a silver dollar.

"Here it is and you may read it."

She wondering took the slip of paper, and read as follows:

"This child is mine. I recognize her, and I know I am her father. Take her. Take good care of her. Abuse her and you die! Take this medal that I give, and give to the child when she grows to a woman. On the day of her marriage I will present her with a similar medal, and then for the first time she will behold her real father."

This was written on a narrow, dirty slip of paper in lead pencil. The marks had evidently been deepened from time to time, as the writing was still quite legible. There was no signature to this, as Rebecca remarked when she handed the paper back to her father.

"But how did you come by this and the medal?" she inquired.

"That brings me to the part of the story that concerns you and I," he replied. "Rebecca, that paper was given to me——"

"Given to you?"

"Yes, Rebecca," he said solemnly, as he pressed her to his breast. "I was that mechanic and you were the little child!"

The look she gave him would have puzzled a conjurer. It was so mixed with belief and unbelief. From a child she had grown into the habit of believing every word he spoke. But how could she believe that this man who now carressed her so fondly was not her father? As far back as she could remember she had always known him as her father. He had always taught her to call him

father, and now to be told so suddenly that he was no relation of hers was a sad blow indeed.

She could look back over the past years of her life and see their home in New York. She could remember her father always melancholy, yet kind. And then she could recollect their leaving the East, and coming to California, when her father took charge of the light house where they now lived, and in all this time she had seen nothing that could have made her believe that the man before her was not her father.

"Father," she said. "Dear father, I can never know you by another name, oh, speak to me and tell me this is not true. Say it is but a silly invention to frighten me."

"Would that I could, Rebecca," was the reply, "but I cannot. Every word I have told you is the truth. You remember when you were a child you used to worry me to tell the name of your mother, and I always refused speaking of her——"

"But do you not know the name of her former husband?"

"No; your mother refused to tell me any of her former life, even her husband's name. I first knew her by the name of Villiers. I was so blinded by my love for her that I married while in entire ignorance of who she was."

"And the man who rescued me from the river, and claimed me as his child. Did you ever see or hear of him again?"

"Never! He left me suddenly that night on the pier, and I have never seen him since. I now believe him to be a crazy person, but at the time, I took a whim to carry out his instructions, and I have faithfully done it. The pencil writing you will perceive is still quite clear. I have renewed it from time to time so you would be able to read it. But I hope this revelation will make you love me none the less as a daughter, for I am sure I shall love you the same as I ever did."

"No, dear father," was the reply. "I could love you none the less than I do now, were I to hear ten times that amount of intelligence every day. If you are not my father by nature, you have at least earned the title of father by your kind deeds and loving words to me——"

He was about to reply, when both were startled by a

heavy knocking at the door. They could also hear the rough voices of men, and they wondered who could be their visitors at that hour of the night.

CHAPTER III.

THE RED LIGHT ON THE CLIFF.

It is a startling thing to hear a knock at your door in a late hour of a stormy night, even if your house be situated in the city: but when the house is in the country, and in a gloomy part of the country, it is far worse. A person at once has a strong presentiment of robbers. It is natural. We are drilled from our childhood to believe that wicked spirits, incarnated in the forms of men, stalk in the midnight hour, and no amount of courage or resolution can shake that belief. Every man who answers a summons to the door after the goodly hour of ten, half expects to find a robber standing on the step.

But a person living in the country seldom answers a summons to the door at a late hour of the night.

They are too cautious for that. The wise old farmers stick their night capped heads out of a second story window and inquire the intruder's business. Those who have never been in the country know this from theatrical farmers. Whoever saw a farmer in a play answer a midnight summons at his front door? He never does! He slyly pokes his head out, way-up among the flats, just under the clouds. Even Brabento, who is a rich senator, and lives in the city, where he has a house full of servants, is afraid to come to the front door. He peeps out of an upper window.

Was it strange, then, that Mr. Kingsley, brave man as he was, should ascend part of the steps of the light-house, and looking out of a small window, inquire what it was his visitors wanted.

There were three men below, as Mr. Kingsley could discern, though the night was very dark.

"What is it you want?" he shouted. "What brings you here this hour of the night?"

"We come on an errand," was the reply. "Your neighbor, Mr. Jackson was taken suddenly ill, and we believe he is now dying! The family wants some of you to come over. We have a conveyance here to carry you, if you'll go, so come down and open the door."

"A sorry story," was the reply of Mr. Kingsley. "Neighbor Jackson lives five miles from here, and he never would send for my daughter or me, to travel that distance on a night like this. Besides, he knows I couldn't leave the lamp. No, no, my men, your story will not answer."

"We tell you it is the truth! Why do you doubt us?" enquired one of the men below.

"Because I know it is not the truth, and I doubt your intentions. Your tale sounds more like the invention of cut-throat robbers than the true story of honest men. Go your ways. If your purposes are good you know why I cannot come; but if your purposes are evil, remember, that though we are few we have stout hearts and trusty fire arms!"

The men made no reply to this, but Kingsley could hear a subdued whispering among them. Two of the men seemed to argue, or try to persuade the third one. Presently, the whispering stopped and the three left the spot.

Now, as it often happens in a case of emergency, Mr. Kingsley was unprepared to meet these men, should they prove to be robbers, and try to effect an entrance to the house. Indeed it was unlikely they were robbers, as there was nothing of value in the house; but the keeper rightly suspected they wanted to tamper with the light for wrecking purposes.

As I said, he was unprepared to meet them. That day he had noticed some imperfection about both of his guns, and he had set about repairing them. In doing so he found it necessary to take both of the guns apart. When he had the deficiency repaired, and was about to put the guns together again, he found some of the necessary screws were lost. Everywhere about the room—every corner was searched, but the screws could not be found, and, as night had come on, and he didn't contemplate any danger, he had given up the search until the next morning.

But now the search was renewed with increased activity but with little success. Perhaps the danger of the situa-

tion made them nervous, for in their hurry, they had often put their fingers within an inch of the screws, and yet missed them.

"What an unlucky thing it was for me to repair those guns to-day," said the keeper. "But is like my usual carelessness. If those men should prove to be villains and try to effect an entrance, I would be unarmed."

"But perhaps you wrong them, said Rebecca. "They may be honest men!"

"It is unlikely," was the reply. Everybody knows I could not leave my position such a night as this. But list!" he continued, as he made a motion of silence and drew near the door. "I think they have returned; I hear the sound of voices in the yard."

Rebecca said nothing, but drew near the door by the keepers side and listened. He noticed that she trembled violently.

"Don't be afraid, dear," he said, as he threw his arms protectingly around her. "Although we are not armed, remember that these strong walls and these stout doors and windows are a good defence."

"I will not fear," she replied firmly and trustingly. "Why should I when a man so brave and strong as you stands gallantly at my side?"

And she threw herself in Kingsley's arms, while he determined that he would die any death or suffer any torture rather than one hair of her fair head should be harmed.

He was right. They could hear the sound of voices in the yard, but they did not know the terrible danger they would be compelled to encounter. A danger, that neither stone walls nor the stout oaken doors could not protect them, for they had a bad and crafty foe to encounter. A wild, savage band of men, whose leader was noted for two characteristics, cunning and boldness.

The three men, after leaving the light house, where they had spoken to Kingsley, had passed out of the yard and into the road, which soon brought them to a glen a short distance from the house, where they were joined by a number of other men, who hailed them and inquired what success.

"The same as I thought we'd have," answered Johnson, for it was the miner's gang. "That Kingsley is a sly, cunning old fox. You don't catch him sticking his head out of a door at this time of night."

"If you had followed my advice," said George Gibson, gruffly, "we'd have had the light out by this time."

"And got shot for our pains," said Johnson. "You don't expect a man of Kingsley's spirit would stand still like a statue, while we were climbing a pole into his upper window? Oh no! I have heard too much of him to believe that."

"Then you accursed cowards," said Gibson, "will you come into the house and help me with the rest, if I climb into the house and capture the keeper single-handed. I know I can do it if I try hard."

Some of the men raised a derisive laugh and Johnson said:

"You would grow fat at that kind of work. Why, Kingsley is a good match for three ordinary men! He is as strong as an ox, and as agile as a circus-rider."

"I care not for that," was the reply. "You don't expect I intend to encounter him with my fists, do you? No, no; an ounce of cold lead is always to be preferred to a bunch of fives. In that it is not bone to bone, where any overgrown fool may gain a victory, but skill to skill, and nerve to nerve. I use the weapons of a gentleman!"

"And with them you will find Kingsley as handy as he is with his fists," replied one of the miners, "for he is the man who won the medal at the last target-shooting in the country. But if your intention is to use pistols, we shall have nothing to do with the enterprise. We don't wish to get mixed up with a murder."

"Then will you follow me if I climb into the house, and with nothing but this sharp knife in my belt encounter the keeper, capture him and open the doors for you to enter?"

The men replied derisively that they would, for no one among them believed that he would attempt so rash a deed.

But they did not know the nature of this bold, bad man, who seemed to have sold his soul to the devil, and would risk his life on any occasion so as to serve him.

Gibson took the pistols from his belt, and handed them to one of the men. Then telling the rest to follow him, he led the way toward the light house.

Just before reaching the gate of the yard, they found a tall trunk of a narrow tree that had been hewn of its

branches lying near the roadside. Gibson ordered the men to pick up this and carry it to where he directed.

They carried it and placed it at the same window where Kingsley had spoken to the three men a short time before. It presented to an active man used to climbing as Gibson was a handy ladder. He first threw off his cloak which would have encumbered him, looked well to the point of his knees, then prepared to ascend the pole.

"We will soon see his dead body thrown out of that window," said one of the miners, as Gibson disappeared in the light house.

"I don't know about that," was the reply of another. "George Gibson is a wonderful man; possessing the cunning of the fox, and the cruelty of the tiger. Kingsley must look well to himself or he will be beaten despite of his strength. It will be a desperate struggle."

And Mr. Kingsley and his daughter stood quietly listening to the voices of the men in the yard and wondering what was their intention.

But they did not remain long in doubt. The voices of the men suddenly ceased, and then they heard for the first time a step on the stone stair of the tower-like light house.

"Is it possible," said Kingsley, "that they could have effected an entrance by that window. It is full twenty feet above the ground. If they are in we are lost," he continued, as he seized a knife and rushed toward the stairs.

He did not go far. As he laid his hand on the door that opened on the little passage that led to the stairs the door was pushed open from the other side, and the keeper encountered a man who wore a red shirt and a mask, and whose hand held a long, dangerous-looking knife.

"Villain!" cried Kingsley, who involuntarily backed a few paces into the room, though not with fear, "what would you do?"

"Surrender!" said a hoarse voice beneath the mask. "Let me open the door and admit my comrades, and you or the lady shall receive no hurt."

"Never!" was the firm reply. "I have accepted this position of trust and I would rather die than betray it."

"Then your blood be on your head," cried Gibson, furiously, as he made a fearful lunge at the other's heart.

which was parried skilfully by the weapon of the other.

"Don't try that game," said Kingsley, as he planted himself in a firm position and stood carefully on his guard. "You will find me a match for two like you. I warn you to leave the room instantly, or I'll lay you dead on the floor."

"Let this decide that," replied Gibson, as he made another furious onslaught.

"Come on then, if you will," cried the other, "but remember, you seek your own death."

So the two rushed at each other, more like two bulldogs, intent on a fleshy bone, than two human creatures living in the enlightened days of the nineteenth century. As the miner had predicted they were well matched. Kingsley, though the largest and strongest of the men, was the inferior of the other in agility and savageness; while Gibson, on the other hand, lacked his opponent's strength and bone.

Gibson was the first to attack. He savagely drove the other to the far corner of the room, where the keeper rallied and soon pushed his opponent out to the middle again. It was a grand sight. The excited faces of the men. (Gibson's mask had been torn off during the struggle.) The clash of their weapons often emitting fiery sparks as they came in contact.

The fierce, rapid movements of their arms, the tiger-like look of the one, and the bold, determined air of the other, bespoke a long battle, fierce and hot.

After the commencement of the battle, neither of the opponents had spoken, but during the two occasional lulls in the fighting, stood glaring each other fiercely in the eyes, while their knives were pressed tightly together, and the keen, watchful looks of the men, told that either was ready for any sudden movement that the other might try to make.

But on the same principle that the sword yields to the pen, and bone to brain, so did the largest of the men finally yield to the smallest.

For Kingsley had overestimated his strength and skill, when engaging with the quick, fierce, savage monster before him. Gibson, besides a natural aptitude for the art, had been drilled in various schools of fencing. While in Philadelphia, it was his constant habit to attend schools where fencing was taught, and his year

and a half in the army had greatly improved him. Of course there is a difference between broadsword fencing and fencing with knives, the latter greatly in favor of superior strength, yet Kingsley soon found his opponent was getting the best, and in a short time he expected to get his death blow.

And his expectations were apparently fulfilled. Kingsley, by a last desperate effort, had driven Gibson back against the door, and was about to make a plunge, when his attention was distracted by some more intruders, who had entered the room, and his opponent taking advantage of his unwariness, suddenly drove his knife to the hilt in the keeper's breast, and he fell like a log to the floor.

Rebecca, during the contest, had remained still with fear. There are three classes of heroines during a fight. The first will pick up the first weapon that comes to her hand, and combine in the attack against the enemy. The second, will scream lustily for help, while the third will keep quiet through fear. Rebecca belonged to the latter class, and she did not speak a word or utter a scream until the arrival of the other miners; then, in her excitement, imagining they were friends, she rushed into the fat arms of Fred Bodgers and begged for protection.

The miners on the outside had waited impatiently for some time, wondering why their companion did not return, and expecting every moment to hear the report of fire-arms. But he not returning, and their curiosity raising their courage, some of them ventured, (among whom was Bodgers, for a wonder, for he was a great coward,) to follow their leader into the light house, by way of climbing into the window.

"You see I couldn't help it," said Gibson, as he wiped the blood from his knife. "The boasting fool compelled me to the deed!"

"Gibson! Gibson!" said Fred Bodgers, solemnly, "You'll get hung."

"And if I do," was the reply, "you'll keep me company. So what's the odds?"

"I!" said Bodgers, frightened; "why, what have I done?"

"What have you done, you overgrown elephant? That is a nice question to ask this time of night. Gentlemen," said he, coolly surveying them all and smiling sweetly, "I suppose I stand amongst members of the church?"

"No," replied Johnson, "but you don't stand amongst murderers."

"Oh no, of course not," said Gibson, scornfully, "you are the lambs, whose fleeces are white as snow. But do you think you can make Judge Lynch's jury think so?"

"Why not, pray. Had any of us a hand in killing that man?"

"You cannot prove that you had not. Where are the witnesses to swear in your defence. While this trembling girl will swear you are complicated in it."

The miners were half frightened into believing this, and when Gibson made the following proposal to them and to the rest who had been let in the door, it was generally agreed to.

"My men," said he, "you're all in the scrape, whether you're guilty or no. You would be condemned by any law, and by mob-law quicker than any other. So if you'd escape the vengeance of the Vigilance Committee, be wise and follow my advice. What will be easier than to put out the lights; wait for the first doomed vessel; secure our prizes, then flee to the mountains, and wait till this affair blows over."

"But what is to be done with the girl?" asked one of the men. "She will set the bloodhounds on our track."

"There is nothing easier," said Gibson, "than the disposal of her. We can take her with us."

Then turning to the fair girl who had sunk in a stupor on the floor, he said. "You would like to accompany us. Wouldn't you my dear? I know you would."

He was about to caress her, but on noticing her condition, the little good in his heart smote him, and he desisted. He moved slowly away from her however, muttering:

"I believe I've struck a mine of luck at last, spite of my growling. Lay there and sleep in peace to-night, my beauty, but to-morrow you may wake on a troublesome future."

The light in the top of the light house had been put out, and the men now gathered on the shore trying to discover any ill-fated vessel that might venture on that dangerous shore.

The wind blew in hurricanes right toward the shore, and the waves came splashing and dashing, till they came to the spot where the miners stood, and formed a white foam around their feet; then as if afraid of com-

ing so near the land, they would recede, only to be replaced by their watery brethren.

But the waves were not alone in feeling the effect of the wind's wrath.

It effected everything and everybody. The trees shook and the leaves fell. The grain almost ripe for the harvest, was dashed down and thrown about like a troubled sea. Even the gigantic rocks on that dark night might be imagined to shake in the breeze. And the sturdy miners as they stood on that gloomy shore had to use their strength to remain on their feet, while their long cloaks waved behind them like victorious banners.

They waited, and their patience was soon rewarded. Far off to the west they could discern the white sails of a noble ship gradually approaching them.

"There," said Gibson, as he pointed to the vessel. "Didn't I tell you we'd prosper? Do you see that ship? Sailing as she is now, how many minutes will it take ere she be in our grasp?"

"Be not too sure of victory," answered he who has been called the oldest miner. "Remember the story I told you to-night. Who knows but what the Invisible Hermit and his mysterious light may appear and frustrate our plans as he did on that night."

"Oh, don't rake up that childish story again," said Gibson, "for no one believes it. Think only of our success!"

"That may be very well," returned the other, "but look there!" he cried suddenly, pointing with his outstretched arm to a neighboring cliff, "what did I tell you? Laugh at my story if you will, but look there. Behold the Red Light on the Cliff!"

The men did look, and found their companion had told the truth. High up, near the top of one of the tallest cliffs, shone a bright red light, as red as blood, which threw a crimson glow on all the surrounding scenery, giving the whole country and the neighboring ocean the appearance of a theatrical tableau, while by the side of the light, and brightly reflected by it, stood a weird figure, whose gray beard reached far down his breast. The dress that he wore seemed, to the awe-struck miners, to be unreal and unearthly, while the staff that he leaned on gave him the appearance of some Pilgrim, bound on a holy mission, to guard over and protect the tempest-tossed mariners.

The wind moaned and whistled over the sea, then shrieked among the mountains.

The wild waves splashed and dashed angrily against the rock-bound coast, while the miners stood motionless with dread of the unearthly apparition; but the Invisible Hermit as he was called, stood firmly at his post, while the Red Light on the Cliff burned brightly on, illuminating both the land and the sea.

CHAPTER IV.

CAPTURED AND ESCAPED.

GIBSON and his companions still stood gazing at the red light as it burned brightly on the cliff.

But presently it disappeared as suddenly as it had come.

And then turning for the first time to look on the ship that was approaching so swiftly to the dangerous rocks, they discovered that she also had disappeared.

"Blast the luck," said Gibson profanely. "I never yet set my foot on a prize, but the devil or some one else steps in and prevents me reaching it. Never mind," he continued, "we have missed that prize, but there is a fairer one awaiting us in the house."

"What do you mean?" inquired Fred Bodgers. "You don't surly expect to find any money up there? Why they were poorer than starved rats."

"Who said anything about money, you fool," said Gibson, contemptuously. "Can't a man speak of a prize without meaning dollars and cents?"

"What do you mean then?" inquired Johnson.

"Why, I mean the keeper's daughter. What can be more pleasant, I ask, than to have a lovely female accompany us to our seclusion? You know that we will be compelled to flee to the mountains till this disagreeable affair blows over, and I intend to take that pretty girl with me to be my mistress. Besides it will be safer for us if she accompanies us, than if we left her behind where she would have a chance to tell all manner of tales."

Some of the men who still possessed some traces of manly feeling, strongly opposed this, saying that if the young lady did accompany them she should be exposed to no insult, but Gibson's strong will conquered in this as in every dispute the men had, so they proceeded to the house to capture Rebecca and carry her to their mountain retreat.

They found her still seated near the fire and, however, unconscious of what had occurred. Gibson revived applied a small flask of liquor to her lips, and she was then ordered to follow them. She obeyed mechanically, and though she passed within a few feet of the body of him who had been so dear to her, she noticed it not, and still seemed unconscious of the dreadful murder that had been perpetrated before her eyes.

The night was as dark without, and the wind howled as loudly as before, but the ruffians heeded it not, and still kept on their journey, dragging their fair captive with them.

Over the rough stony road, often stumbling over the projecting rocks, that the darkness of the night rendered invisible, the ruffians kept steadily on their course. Their thoughts were but to escape from a dreadful punishment, so they cared not for the entreaties of the poor girl, who was being hurried on faster than her strength would admit.

The sharp mountain wind had revived her too, and now the whole dreadful scene of the murder came before her again as plain and as horrible as when it had happened.

In the desperation of the moment a courage had come to her which was quite unnatural, and she denounced the murderers of her father in fierce terms, but they laughed at her curses as they did her entreaties, and still kept hurrying on to the secret cavern, unmindful of anything but escape.

The cavern where the villains contemplated concealment was situated in one of the rocky passes of the mountains, not far distant from the valley where their hut was situated.

It was entered by a natural massive doorway, that was surrounded on either side and above by gigantic rocks. This opening was approached by a rough narrow mountain foot-path, that had been worn on the ground years ago by a tribe of Indians who once dwelt in the neighborhood, but now it was almost unfrequented, and its

seclusion rendered the cave a secure retreat for whoever might claim its shelter.

On entering the cavern, they found themselves in a large, gloomy area. Some of the men carried torches, and by their light the adventurers discovered the cavern was divided into two sections—an outer and an inner—by a small, but fierce underground stream, that passing through the mountain, ran through the very heart of the cavern.

The bed of the stream was deep, and completely divided the floor of the cavern. The men wished to reach the inner side, so they were compelled to cut a small tree, and throw it over the crevice before they could pass over. They reached the inner side and felt safe for the present.

While in this cavern, Rebecca experienced the first of Gibson's disagreeable attentions.

They had been living here three days. All of the men, excepting Gibson, had gone to their former home—the hut, to bring provisions. Gibson had remained behind for purposes of his own.

As yet, Rebecca had not been annoyed by any of the men; her grief appealing to the hearts of the hardest of them. But now she feared Gibson's intentions.

They had been alone for some moments before Gibson broke the silence:

"I hope you are recovering from your melancholy," he said, speaking to her for the first time since the night of the murder.

Rebecca made no reply, and Gibson continued:

"You had better make yourself contented, for I will tell you that I strongly object to a moping wife."

She looked at him with wonder.

"You need not open your eyes so wide at the mention of wife. I suppose you have guessed my purpose in bringing you here?"

She replied that she had no knowledge of his intentions.

A silence followed this. Gibson's face betrayed signs of embarrassment. Villain as he was, he had not courage to make a dishonest proposal to the pure creature who sat before him.

And yet he could not relinquish the base measure that had taken possession of his brain. He paced the rough floor with nervous steps. Rebecca sat impatiently, waiting for him to speak—wondering what was to be her

doom. Yet the rough man who held her captive, still walked the floor in silence.

He gained courage to continue the proposal.

"You are of course prejudiced against me. The deed I committed was a horrible one."

"A mean and cowardly one, rather," she said.

He lifted his eyebrows in surprise, and stopped short in his walk. He could not imagine that the trembling girl could raise courage to make a reply. However, he proceeded, unheeding her remark.

"The deed was a horrible one, but was committed in self defence. I was foolish in attempting what I did. If I had reflected on the consequences, your father would still have been living."

She did not reply. She was seated on a stone that lay near the cavern's side. She appeared to be silently crying, her elbows rested on her knees, and her face was in her hands.

"But the crime is committed and cannot be atoned for. I suppose I must bear the consequences. You have certainly taken a dislike to me, but now you are in my power, so you cannot help yourself. I want you to be my wife."

She slowly raised her face and looked at him; a look of mingled wonder and contempt.

"It may surprise you," he said, brutally; "I certainly expected it would. You look upon me with contempt. I look upon you, and my thoughts are but of love."

The libertine look in his eyes proved the lie he had spoken. Rebecca noticed it when she answered:

"Your looks prove your thoughts are far different from thoughts of love."

"Then my looks belie me," he answered. "From the moment when I first saw you on that terrible night, I can think of you and of you only."

"If you loved me," she said, "you would not keep me a captive in this dismal hole."

She had fallen on her knees before him, and looked up supplicatingly into his face.

"Oh think," she pleaded, "of the suffering I have undergone within the last two days. Remember my misery. I am alone in the world; no strong arm to defend me——"

"Stop there," said Gibson. "You can't say you have no one to defend you while I remain at your side. Let

any of these ruffians, who are my companions, offer the first word of insult to you and he dies."

He had approached near her, and stooping down to where she was kneeling, had drawn her to his breast.

In vain she tried to resist him, but Rebecca was weak while he was strong. He assumed as gentle a tone as his nature would permit, and tried to ease her fears.

"Come," he said, "you have no cause to be alarmed. I meditate no more serious harm to you than to make you my wife. That I am resolved you shall be, and at an early moment. Farther than that you will receive no injury."

He pressed her so tightly to him that she could scarcely move. She felt his rough whiskered face against her smooth cheek.

"Do release me," she said, trying to push him from her.

"Give me one kiss, then."

He tried to kiss her. This time she struggled with greater violence than before, and he was unable to accomplish his object.

But she could not have resisted long against his strength, had not a circumstance happened in her favor.

At the moment when Gibson was about accomplishing his object of kissing the fair girl, so much against her will, sounds of rapidly approaching footsteps were heard.

The sound became plainer; it was approaching the cavern.

Presently, all of Gibson's companions rushed through the mouth of the cavern in great consternation. Then one following the other, they quickly crossed the log that connected its outer and inner portions.

Johnson who was the last man to cross, seized an axe as soon as he was over and cut his end of the log. It fell, with a plunge, into the rapid waters below, and was carried swiftly along the stream course under those immense mountains.

"What do you mean?" inquired Gibson, "what is the cause of this panic?"

He had come amongst the men and looked inquiringly into each of their faces. He received but one answer from them all—

"Indians."

There was no cause for a further explanation, for the word was no sooner out of their mouths, than the mouth of the cave was darkened with the forms of many savages who had entered.

They advanced to the edge of the stream and stood confronting the terrified whites. Terrified, with one exception. That exception was the youngest of their number, who had grasped his weapons, and now stood awaiting the attack, as calm and unconcerned as were the rocks about him.

About forty red savages, their faces showing every sign of brutality and ignorance, stood face to face with the miners. The latter were only saved from immediate capture or slaughter by the friendly stream that intervened.

This was not long an obstacle, however. Some of the savages had procured a log, and this being thrown over the stream the whole number prepared to pass over.

Gibson saw their intention and was prepared to give them a warm reception.

"Now, boys," he said, "we must fight desperately. It is their lives or ours!"

The men had somewhat recovered from their panic. Seizing such weapons as came to their hands, they imitated their leader's example and firmly awaited the attack.

The Indians at first hesitated when they saw the decision of the others. Their superior numbers however, renewed their courage, and the boldest of them began to cross the stream. Their chief was the first over.

Gibson handed his pistols to several of his men but retained the knife.

"Here," he said, "take this and defend yourselves. A knife is my favorite weapon."

The chief and several others had now crossed the stream and advanced to the attack. Gibson was the first to act on the defensive.

"Come on you red devils," he shouted, "come on and meet your doom."

The Indian replied by a yell, and rushed on the white man. Gibson was fully prepared, and the blow of the savage tomahawk passed off harmless.

The Indian then dropped his tomahawk and prepared to meet his opponent with his own weapon, the knife.

It was a fierce and bloody struggle. The men were well matched. The Indian was the stoutest and most muscular, and had been used to encounters from childhood. The white man possessed the greatest activity, and, though his early life was a peaceful one, he was a fighter by nature.

The Indian soon found he was getting the worst, and called for help. Several of the savages came to his assistance. By these superior numbers Gibson was disarmed. One of them was about to drive his knife into the desperado's heart, but the chief exclaimed :

"No, no, he too brave! Let the white man live."

Gibson was then bound and guarded by one while the rest of the savages joined in the attack on the other men.

At the commencement of the fight, when Gibson had engaged with the chief, Johnson and the others were not idle. As the Indians advanced over the stream by their narrow bridge, they were met by a heavy fire. Many of them were shot, and their bodies fell into the water, where they were quickly seized by the eager stream.

The majority of the savages passed safely over, and their numbers soon overcame the handful of whites.

The prisoners were soon bound. But two of the whites had been killed in the struggle.

During the fight, Rebecca had remained in the farthest corner of the cave. Many of the bullets had struck the rocks quite near to her head, and she had been in great dread.

Fear throbbed at her heart, and crept among the roots of her hair. She trembled like an aspen. But still the battle continued, and the poor girl expected every moment to be her last.

After the battle she was made prisoner. With their arms securely bound the prisoners were marched out of the cavern and toward the Indian encampment.

The encampment lay many miles from the place of their capture. It was a weary march for the prisoners, with their arms bound as were theirs. They would often stumble over stones or the boughs of fallen trees, but they would be immediately commanded by their captors to arise and pursue their journey.

The chief of the band was the one who had the encounter with Gibson at the beginning of the battle.

He was a tall, stalwart savage, as straight as the arrows his ancestors had used for weapons.

He and his companions were armed with rifles. He looked like a man who could not be trifled with. His hard hairless face, with the prominent cheek bones; his watchful gray eyes; the precision of his movements; his silent manner, all denoted this was a man to be feared; a man who might make a good friend, but who would make a better enemy; a man of cunning, boldness and desperation.

They proceeded over the mountain road till the sun had disappeared in the west, and night had closed around them. The chief then ordered a halt, and some of the savages began to prepare supper.

They gathered the boughs of trees and such large sticks as could be found and kindled a fire. The bright flames were soon blazing high, and spread a glow on the faces of the surrounding savages and their prisoners.

The supper composed of a quantity of bear's meat was soon cooked and ate, and then they prepared to take their rest for the night.

For some purpose of their own, the band did not sleep together, but separated. There were about forty of them, and these divided in halves. One-half retaining half of the prisoners, staid at the original fire. Gibson and Rebecca were with this half. The chief also staid with them. The others built a fire some distance off and took Johnson, Bodgers and some others with them. Each band had one sentinel, who staid awake and watched, while the others slept.

The hours of the night passed on, and the little encampment was wrapped in slumber. Captives seemed to sleep as soundly as captors. But there was one who did not sleep. Rebecca remained awake, watchful and fearful of the near future. How would this adventure end? Ought she to be thankful in thus escaping from the clutches of Gibson, or was her present situation the worse? She had heard much of the cruelty of the red man, but she had experienced that of the white.

All was quiet, save the deep breathing of the sleeping men. The sentinel remained at his post, a distance from the others, but he too seemed half overcome by the fatigues of the day. Could she elude his vigilance, and creeping off into the darkness, escape.

I have said she was a naturally timid girl. But timid

people sometimes show great nerve under difficulties. Rebecca had remained awe-struck and helpless, while the ruffian was despatching him she loved, but then she was unused to peril of any kind. Now her dangers had driven some of this timidity from her. Though her boldness surprised even her, she determined to attempt an escape.

After considerable trial, with a great effort she regained her feet. Her hands she freed from her side. Noiselessly she crept between the forms of the men. Constantly would she turn to look at the sentinel, but he seemed to be slumbering as soundly as the rest. She reached the darkness, out of the range of the bright fire. The probability of escape was with her. Hope glowed in her heart.

Farther, farther from the fire. With what light steps she treads the ground. She quickens her pace, for she discovers a deep wood lying before her. In its seclusion she hopes to find a safe hiding-place.

She enters the wood. There are many noble trees, but they stand at too great a distance from each other. There is no close underbrush, as she wishes to find. She discovers a small brook and she follows it. Perhaps it will lead her to a refuge.

It does. Near its course is a thicket such as she desired. The tangled thorns, the heavy foliage, render it secure. She enters the thicket. Her foot steps in the mud as she does so, and the thorns scratch her face and hands. She cares not; she thinks not of present suffering. Her mind is on those dreaded savages.

Onward—feeling her way, she goes. The darkness is intense; it pains her eyes as she tries to pierce through it. But onward—never minding her wounds—never minding the obstruction. She stumbles over the trunk of a fallen tree, and her face goes in the mud. Her excitement is so great she scarcely thinks of it.

The ground gets dryer as she proceeds. The thicket gets less dense. She still advances. She knows not of the danger she is approaching.

A few feet in front of her stands a low, grown, but widely spread tree. Its branches are covered with a thick foliage. Concealed among this is a huge panther. He sees the approaching girl though she cannot see him.

A panther—savage, like his kind; still more savage

by long-sustained hunger. She sees him not—she dreams not of danger. His head protrudes between the leaves, and his eyeballs glow like coals of fire. Her gaze is in another direction. She is within a few steps of the tree. She turns her head and sees the fiery eyeballs. But too late! too late!

A sudden spring, and his dagger-like claws are on her shoulders. His teeth snap near her face. She feels his breath. No time for prayer. A death horrible and immediate claims her. In her fright she even grasped the panther, and held him with the grasp of death. But it is useless. She has fallen to the ground, and the fierce beast renews the attack. She closes her eyes, expecting to open them in eternity. She feels the beast's teeth in her flesh, when——

The quick report of a rifle; the cry of a man's voice; a sudden stroke by a strong arm, and the girl is saved.

CHAPTER V.

RECAPTURED.

THE poor girl lay insensible on the ground, and the panther lay stretched dead at her side.

A man was bending over the girl and was chaffing her hands. His labors were soon rewarded. She began to show signs of consciousness.

When she opened her eyes, she discovered a tall man standing near her holding a torch in one hand.

His other hand was on a rifle. The panther was lying by her—side by side. The blood was still pouring from the wound where the bullet had penetrated. The light of the torch showed the nature of the thicket she had ventured into. It was a dark and gloomy place—a fit abode for wild beasts.

Yet she could only look at the man who had so miraculously preserved her.

She thought she had seen him somewhere before, yet she could not tell where. He was a man of fifty years or more. The bold prominent face bespoke courage. The watchful eyes—vigilance. His looks and bearing well became the dress he wore—that of a hunter.

He noticed she still remembered her danger and was shaking with fear. He spoke to her encouragingly.

"Cheer up, my daughter," he said. "The danger is now past. You have nothing to fear while my powder is dry and my hand remains firm."

She looked gratefully at him and replied:

"I can believe you. Your eye tells me you are noble and good as you are bold. But for you, brave hunter, I should have fallen a victim to this ferocious panther."

"It is a dangerous place," he said, "for such a slight creature as you to venture into. Even the damp air may prove deathly. Come, let me lead you to shelter."

She told him why she had come here, and of the fear of the Indians.

He smiled kindly and took her hand. She yielded it with childlike faith, for she felt she could trust this man.

"My daughter has sought very dangerous shelter," he said, after listening to her explanation. "You did not know the Indian when in search of a fugitive first searches such thickets."

She confessed to her ignorance, but said she could rely firmly on him.

"You will not misplace your confidence. You can find no one more used to these forests and the surrounding mountains than I."

With his large brown hand gently closed round her small delicate one, he led her out of the thicket by a different way than she had entered it.

After an hour's walk they had emerged from the wood and began to ascend the mountain.

They had ascended but a short distance when the hunter turned off on a smaller path and they came before the mouth of a small cave or den that descended into the rocks.

The hunter was about to enter but Rebecca shrank back. She soon advanced however under the hunter's coaxing.

"You have nothing to fear," he said, as she at last became reassured. "The den contains nobody more dangerous than my faithful Carlo. He will not hurt you, but will rather prove an efficient guard."

He again took her hand and she yielded. The hunter

led the way carrying a torch, while the gentle girl followed.

She supposed by the hunter's words that Carlo was a fierce dog. What was her surprise to find him an enormous grizzly bear. He was sitting on his haunches as the two entered.

On noticing the girl he came toward her with a menacing aspect.

"Lie down, Carlo, lie down," said the hunter. "For shame on you old boy, that you should join ruffians and redskins on an attack on a defenseless girl."

Rebecca had given him a full narrative of her former adventures.

The bear merely replied by a growl to the hunter, and laid himself down on the ground to sleep. The hunter very composedly took a seat on the bear's back. He told the girl to do likewise, but she refused tremblingly.

"Well, I can hardly blame you," said the hunter. "Many a man would shrink from it as well as you."

He took his thick hunter's frock from him and laid it on the ground.

"There," he said, "lie on that. You look worn and weary and you sadly need rest. So lie down and sleep, while Carlo and I faithfully keep guard."

He looked too noble to do harm and she trusted him. Feeling as safe as if her father was in the hunter's place, she lay on the hard bed and soundly slept.

The hours passed on and the girl and the bear seemed to sleep in unison. But the hunter remained awake. Not for a moment did he close his eyes or show the least sign of fatigue.

But at last the first peep of morning appeared. A faint streak of light forced itself into the cave.

The hunter bent over the sleeping form of the girl, and gazed intently at her features.

She was still sleeping calmly, and a smile played about her mouth that seemed angelic.

"Poor girl, she is dreaming of happier times," said the hunter, sadly. "How strange is providence, that it oftentimes permits the weak to encounter such perils, while the strong pass their days in peace."

He tenderly stroked the fair hair that clustered on her head and covered her neck. There was but the kind look of a father on his face as he did so.

"She has led a strange life, and I am to blame," he continued. "Oh, why did I not take her on that fatal night? Why did I not claim her then, and bestow on her the love of a father? My life would have been better; hers would have been safer and happier. But no doubt Kingsley has been good to her."

She stirred in her sleep and he ceased speaking, When she became still, he proceeded:

"She bears a strong resemblance to her mother, as I first saw her. The same sweet face; the same beautiful form. Will she ever fall so low as her mother had? Who can tell? Under the same temptations would she still maintain her purity?

"But it is my duty to see she does not fall. Yes, I am resolved. I will no more watch over her in secret, but unfold myself to her, and claim the office that Heaven designed me to fill. Shall I do it now? Shall I wake her, and tell her of a father's love, of a father's protection? Shall I tell her of the many days I have watched her? how I traced her through her perils? Shall I tell her, though invisible to men, and by them called a spirit, I still retain the human flesh and blood? I can still feel the beat of the human heart.

He considered. He seemed resolved. He laid his hand on the girl's arm and was about to wake her. A suspicion flashed across his brain that was plainly reflected on his face. The look of suspicion was followed by a look of pain. He covered his face with his hands and moaned bitterly.

"No, no, I cannot tell her. I will not tell her. She looks smiling and sweet. She bears the form of an angel, but the spirit of her mother may lurk beneath that lovely shape. I'd be a fool, a mad, brainless fool, to trust her; she'd betray me. She looks incapable of the deed, I know, as she lies there so sweetly, but how did her mother look an hour before she brought the officers of justice to my room? Avaunt! avaunt! I say, every thought of good! Come and bring me your help, ye evil powers who have so long sustained me. I feel as if the treacherous spirit of her mother now lies sleeping with her. The curse that I have so long revoked I now renew. On every offspring of that accursed union; on my children both, whom once I so dearly loved may destruction fall. I go from this cave, and every thought of good dies within me. I'll forsake her. I'll leave her to the mercies of this terrible brute."

He rushed from the den and ran along the path that led from the mountain. He gained the wood, and here he slackened his pace. The expression of his features seemed to change from anger to that of mingled horror and pity. He turned and retraced his steps toward the den. He had advanced many yards when he again stopped, and his brain seemed racked with a terrible irresolution. At last he once more seemed resolved in his former resolution, and he bent his footsteps once more from the den.

"I cannot go back," he said, remorsefully. "The brute has awakened by this time. I would only behold another act in the tragedy."

In his imagination, he saw the beast, now aroused, tear the body of the girl limb from limb, and he closed his eyes, as if the sight was really visible, and he would shut it out.

"My child! my child! my poor innocent child!" he moaned, as he ran toward the woods at a rapid pace, as if fleeing from the horror.

The sun rose higher and higher, and ushered in another day. The faint streak of light in the cave increased and warmed the face of the sleeping girl. It played around her closed eyelids and she awoke.

With her awakening came the whole recollection of the previous night. She looked for the hunter, but he was gone. The bear still remained, to her horror.

Had the hunter deceived her? Had he decoyed her into this den only to be devoured by this ferocious beast? The act was inhuman. She could not believe it. She remembered his conduct when the panther had attacked her, and she would not believe it. The hunter had gone to procure food. He would soon return. His looks were too merciful to seek her life.

For a short time she waited patiently. She lay very still fearing the least move on her part would awaken the brute. Strange to say the brute did not wake. Had the hunter drugged him before retiring? She believed he had.

But suppose he should awake. Then there would be no help for her. She remembered how ferociously he had advanced on her the night before when she had first entered the den. At any risk she determined to escape. With Heaven's help she would noiselessly creep out and try to gain some of the high-roads where she might meet friends.

She advanced to the mouth of the cave, not daring to look back. She advanced but another step and she knew she was lost. A terrible growl shook the cave behind her and she heard the heavy pattering of the feet of the grizzly bear.

Desperation lent her strength. Fear lent her swiftness. She ran as she never ran before. But useless. With rapid paces the bear gained on her. She dared not look back but she heard his growl close behind her. She was lost. She threw up her arms in despair. The beast seized her dress and kept her back. He had risen on his haunches and now clasped her frail body in his powerful arms.

The loud cry of many voices—the fierce yell peculiar to the American savage—and the discharge of several fire arms. The bear relaxed his hold and fell—the blood running from him in many places. The girl had fainted with fright, and was now unconscious of what was happening.

It was the Indians who had saved her life this time. The same she had escaped from the previous night. The fierce tribe of the Apaches.

Their chief was with them. His name was Kingo lake. He looked on the fair girl who had fainted, and his looks forewarned evil to her. There was too amorous an expression in his eye.

Rebecca soon revived, and reviving, found herself again in the hands of her dreaded captors. Her fear was now heightened. Before the chief's manner towards her was fierce; then she feared death in a horrible form. Now it was too kind and gentle to be in keeping with his character, and she feared something worse than death.

The march was again taken up. The Indians advanced in single file. Rebecca was not bound this time, but was guarded by the chief and another Indian who walked on each side of her.

They were on their way to join their companions who had remained at the fires they had built the night before. The encampment lay at not a great distance from the spot where Rebecca was recaptured.

The file of savages had descended from the mountain and were passing through the woods.

As they passed through a dense thicket that lay in their way, the vigilant eyes of the chief detected a movement in some bushes near. He spoke a few words to his Indians and they moved in the direction of the

bushes. They had no sooner done so when a man started from the covert where he had been hiding and ran for his life—swaying his body as he ran to escape the bullets of his pursuers.

The Indians pursued with fierce yells that made the old forest ring again. Several weapons were discharged without effect. Several more were discharged and the form of the flying man was seen to stop, then totter, then fall.

The Indians came up to him. He had been badly wounded, but not mortally. One of them took his knife and was proceeding to scalp him. The wounded man raised his hand and waved it before the Indian's eyes. The savage felt a tremor creeping through his bones, and shrank back in dismay.

There was a consultation between the Indians. The Indian who would have scalped him called him a demon, and was in favor of letting him go.

The others laughed at this, but no man among them had the courage to renew the scalping. However, they lifted him from the ground and conveyed him to their chief.

Rebecca was still held by the chief and the other savage. She saw the man start from the bushes and run, and she inwardly prayed he might escape. But when she saw the captors return with the wounded man, she determined to plead with the chief, even at her own risk, in his behalf.

As the captive drew near her, she looked to see if she could recognize him. One glance, and she shrank back in astonishment and pity. The Indians had captured the hunter who had so gallantly rescued her the night before, and then so cruelly betrayed her to the mercies of that ferocious animal, the grizzly bear.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEAD ALIVE.

In a few days the camp of the Apaches was reached.

The hunter had been wounded severely, and he was allowed a tent by himself. The Indians half-believed he was a demon, and tried to conciliate him by this kindness for his wounds and capture.

He had been lying in his tent several days. As yet,

no one had visited him but an old squaw named Too-loo-so and the Indian doctor. Too-loo-so would act as a nurse when she did come, but her visits were not very frequent. The hunter was greatly surprised when the curtains of the tent were drawn aside and Rebecca Kingsley, the girl whom he had so mercilessly left in the den alone with the bear, entered.

The hunter had been too faint with loss of blood at the time of his capture to recognize Rebecca, and he did not know she was a prisoner with him.

He started back with horror and shame as she entered; but no word of reproach did she utter.

He was lying on some bearskins in the back part of the tent. A rough three-legged stool that had been stolen somewhere was standing near him. Rebecca sat on this stool and spoke to the wounded man.

"I am sorry that this calamity has happened, yet I am glad I have an opportunity of slightly repaying the great good you have done me."

The wounded man turned on his bed and groaned, but said nothing.

Rebecca continued:

"I have obtained permission to stay in your tent and be your nurse. I'll stay by you, and if you want anything it will be because I have not the power to obtain it for you."

"Alas!" said the sufferer, "I can take no kindness from your hands."

"Why not?" asked the girl. "I am sure you have well earned any kindness I can bestow."

The man returned a groan.

"But the cave. I so cruelly deserted you."

"Oh, I never thought of that. I am sure you did it for my good. I supposed you had gone in quest of food."

"Suppose," said the man, as he raised himself on his elbow and gazed earnestly at her; "suppose that was not my reason for leaving the cave. Suppose I tell you that I decoyed you there to seek your death. What if, instead of being your friend I was your bitterest enemy. What would you think of me then?"

Rebecca bent her truthful, earnest eyes on him and answered in such a manner that he could not doubt her.

"If you told me this I would not believe you," she

said. "I can put but one interpretation on your meaning. Your deed was a noble and generous one, and no one can persuade me the performer of it was other than noble and generous."

The hunter took her hand and held it as he spoke.

"Whatever my intentions have been, in the future they will never be other than intentions of kindness to you. I feel no peril I can endure could ever repay even the kind looks you have bestowed on me. You are too pure, too gentle, to be near one so vile as I am. I pray you to leave me, and let me suffer in solitude these pains that heaven has so justly bestowed on me."

The girl still held his hand and smiled so sweetly as she replied: "If I leave you now, may all hopes of heaven leave me forever." That it would have taken no great stretch of imagination on his part to have imagined her an angel. * * * *

Gibson and his confederates did not fare so well at first as Rebecca and the wounded hunter. Rebecca was favored, because the chief thought she would make him a good wife, and the chief wished to ingratiate himself in her favor. The hunter was favored, because the Indians thought he possessed inhuman power, and they feared him, and wished also to gain his favor. But Gibson and the others they neither loved nor feared, so they had to put up with indignities that were spared the other captives.

But Gibson's usual success among wild, lawless men followed him here and it was not long before some of the chiefs discovered that he was a remarkable young man, and would make a remarkable brave Indian warrior, if he would only turn renegade.

There was a consultation held among the chiefs, and it was decided to ask the young outlaw to become an Apache.

So he was invited to the chieftain's tent, and the question was put to him. He readily consented to become an Indian, and not only that, he soon induced the whole of his followers to become Indians. They made very presentable savages, when they put on the costume of the tribe—that is, all of them, with the exception of Bodgers. Fred's flesh went greatly against his appearance, and one old Indian was moved to remark:

"Our brother too big; eat too big heap."

But Fred's personal appearance, pleased at least one of

the native inhabitants of that Indian village. This was an Indian lady named Cow-os-cow-bow-os-cow. It was not her maiden name, but she had gained it on marrying Mr. Cow-os-Cow. Her husband got stubborn one night, and he determined he would not support his wife and children any longer, so he seized a keg of whisky and drank himself to death. Consequently, Mrs. Cow-os-cow became a widow, but being of a loving nature she soon tired of the weeds, and began an anxious search for another husband.

Now, Mr. Cow-os-cow had been very lean and lank, and his spouse was weary of his style, so her heart yearned for a fat husband. Bodgers was very fat. Bodgers pleased the lady's taste.

The lady was very attractive, though not very beautiful. She was made very attractive by the profusion of gilt jewelry that adorned her person. She was not beautiful, because nature had not made her so. Her face was round and very greasy-looking. Her body was rounder, and several feet longer than her legs. Now this was a decided deformity. Her nose was not delightfully aquiline, but a homely pug. Her eyes were fishy and her age was fifty. Still, in spite of these drawbacks Mr. Cow-os-cow's widow aspired to the hand of the fleshy Bodgers.

The widow had three children, but as they are unimportant personages, I will not describe them especially, as they possessed such remarkable names, I am afraid I could not spell them correctly.

Mrs. Cow-os-cow gave a reception and Mr. Bodgers was invited. The unsuspecting Fred accepted the invitation. He came and was slightly surprised. He expected the company would be composed of ladies and gentlemen. He found the ladies only.

Fred was naturally bashful in the company of females, but on this occasion he was bound to do his duty as a man, so he plucked up all the courage he possessed and entered the tent. He sat on the ground in the midst of the ladies. There were four ladies there beside the lady of the house. Mrs. Ketchum, Mrs. Dog-er-al, and Mrs. Sim-per-son, all widows, and Miss Dry-Beans, an old maiden who seemed to be the most amorous of the party.

But they were all amorous enough, Fred soon found to his great discontent. Mrs. Cow-os-cow had made a

great mistake when she invited these females, for in five minutes they had all fallen in love with Fred, and the good lady found she had four dangerous rivals.

At first their passion was shown by amorous glances. Then poor Fred began to see that the ladies were twitching toward him. Nearer, nearer they came until he could feel their hearts panting against him on every side. The fatal moment came at last. The fair Miss Dry-beans could no longer restrain her passion, so she threw her arms about Fred's neck, and in a second as it were her example was followed by the four widows.

Now a man's neck at the best is but a slender surface to rest four pair of arms upon, and consequently the five ladies soon began to quarrel for more room. The quarrelling led to scratching; and then Frederick Bodgers, Esq., was in a particularly unpleasant predicament.

But things soon assumed a still worse aspect if possible. The door of the tent opened and five stalwart savages entered. These were five blood relations of the five loving ladies.

At the sight of Bodgers so lovingly surrounded, these gentlemen were filled with a terrible wrath. They said Bodgers intended to ruin the honor of their families, and they swore he should marry the whole of the five females on the spot, or die the death he so justly merited. Fred had naturally a strong repugnance to dying, so he chose the least of the two evils.

He consented to marry the five dirty, greasy squaws, and when the shades of evening fell on that Indian village they found Fred Bodgers a man of numerous a rather family.

Thus was a poor weak mortal ensnared into the meshes of Hymen, because he possessed a superabundance of flesh.

Gibson's adventures were not quite so desperate. Though many of the Indian beauties had taken a liking to him, he was far too stubborn to take a liking to them, but continued his attachment to Rebecca. As the weeks rolled on and he began to gain power in the tribe, he began to renew his power over her.

In time the hunter recovered (thanks to Rebecca's kind attentions) from his injuries, and was able to walk about. The Indians offered him the same privilege as had been offered to the others of becoming one of them, but he stoutly refused. He was still kept a prisoner,

and consigned to such servile employment as helping the chief squaws with the cooking.

One evening Rebecca was sitting in her tent with an old, wrinkled hag, who acted as her guardian.

Presently, the hag bent her scowling eyes on the young girl, and broke the silence, by exclaiming:

"To-night is the night the chief has set apart to know the will of the white girl. Will you be his wife? I go to the chief. What answer shall he have?"

Rebecca looked firmly at the other as she replied: "I will never be his wife."

"But you don't know the rest," laughed the hag, bitterly. "Very easy it is to say, 'I won't be the chief wife,' but remember, you must be either his wife or his mistress."

"Never!" said the girl, firmly, but the hag could see the feeling of loathing creeping over her. "I will never be either to him. I will die first."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old woman, and her toothless gums quivered with her fierce merriment. "You will die, 'tis easily said, but not so easily performed. You will not be allowed to die. Kingolake will come and clasp you in his strong arms and bear you to his tent. Then though your body may shrink with your loathing, the strong old man's arms will be clasped about you. He will kiss and caress you, and you will remain in his power as helpless as an infant. Then I will laugh; oh how I will laugh, when I know another victim has been added to the list of the fair and beautiful who have been robbed of their honor."

But was there no plan for escape? Why was it that this savage old woman should so gloat over the prospect of her dishonor. Could she not soften her hard hearted gaoler and try to persuade her (the gaoler) to let her try. She could try.

With many soft words, with many earnest entreaties, did she try, but her efforts were useless.

The old hag seemed the more pleased the more she tried, and would often express her joy by narrating the horrors Rebecca would soon be compelled to encounter.

"What object?" at last cried the poor girl, in her agony, "what object can you have in thus torturing me. I have never done or said aught against you that I have any knowledge of."

"If by any deed, or word, or even thought. I have ever injured, pray let me know, that here, on my knees, I may pray you to pardon me."

"What have you done?" cried the hag, as a terrible scowl overspread her features. "How can you ask when you belong to the white race, the born enemies of all the red men and women, but especially of me."

"Why should they be your enemies?" inquired the girl. "What have you done, that they should form so particular an enmity to you?"

"What have I done?" shrieked the hag, as she raised her arms in her astonishment. "Hear her, ye furies. She talks as if it was I that had done the injury. Girl, why don't you ask what they have done?"

"Have the white men injured you?" asked Rebecca.

"Listen, girl, and you shall hear how they have injured me, and after hearing my story you will not so wonder that I gloat over your downfall.

"You look in my face, and you see the frightful wrinkled face of a hag. You look at my body and you call me witch. Sixty years ago, if you had seen me, you would have seen quite a different person. Then I was a beautiful Indian girl.

"It happened about that time a trader came to our village with his wares to sell. He was a Frenchman. He was one of the most handsome men I had ever seen, and it was said he was very wealthy. He was attracted by the charms of my person, as I was by him. In a word, we were soon warmly in love with each other, and at last he proposed that I should leave the home of the red man and go with him to the great city, where he lived. He said he could not make me his wife till he had reached his home, but he swore solemnly he would when he had reached it.

"I consented, and against the wish of my father and the whole of my race, I forsook the land where I was born, and the home that had sheltered me, and went with the white man to his distant country.

"We reached the city and he took me to a beautiful house; which he said I was to call my own. It was situated a short distance from the city, and was surrounded by a garden which contained many pretty flowers. It was a beautiful home, and just such a one as lovers would have chosen.

"We lived here happily together but a short time. I

began to be frightened because of his refusal when I asked him to make me his wife.

"I reminded him of his promise, but he would laugh, and say, in jest, there was plenty of time. Weeks and months rolled by, and still he refused. My danger increased every day, for I felt I would soon become a mother.

"Before the first year had drawn to a close, I gave birth to a child and my ruin was complete.

"One day, shortly after the birth of my child, he came to me and kissed me, and said business would compel his absence from me for a long time. For a month, or may be more, he had to go back to the country where my father lived, and he asked me whether I had any word or any little presents for him to take to my friends. I told him I had none, but if they inquired for me to tell them I was dead, for I never wished to see or hear of them again.

"He answered me by a light laugh, and with another caress (which I repelled, I thank Heaven, I remember) he left me.

"A month and more had come and gone, and still he came not. My suspicions were soon aroused and confirmed. He had deserted me, and I and my poor, helpless babe were left in strangers' land, friendless and penniless.

"My revenge came at last. I had resolved on wiping out my wrongs with his heart's blood if ever again he crossed my path. The demon that has ever since pursued me, placed him before me and made me a murderer. In an evil hour I met him as he walked the street, with a lady and two children. I afterwards discovered that the lady was his wife and the children were his own!

"I followed them until they came to a house where I supposed they lived. I inquired of the neighbors who they were, and of the relations existing between them. Then I determined to track him down, and when the chance offered plunge my dagger into his heart. That night the chance came. I met him as he came from his house. Unseen by him, I slowly approached and drove my dagger to its hilt into his breast!

"I was not suspected at first, and a chance was offered me to escape. To return to my tribe I dare not, but with my babe on my back after the fashion of my peo-

ple, and with the few dollars I had saved in my pocket, I set out to reach some of the far distant tribes where I was unknown.

"Finally, I came to the tribe of Apaches, footsore and starving and they befriended me, and I have lived with them ever since. I glory in their many victories over the whites, and often do I curse that I was not born a man, that I might accompany them on the war path!"

The witch paused for breath, and ere she could again proceed, she was interrupted by the curtains of the tent being drawn aside and Kingo-lake entering. The chief had come to claim his bride.

"Is the fair girl ready?" said the chief, as he bent his amorous glance on the beautiful form of the young girl. "The hour has come for her to decide. Will she be the bride of the renowned Kin-go-lake?"

"Never!" was the reply, in a firm voice. "I will die first."

"The maiden is foolish," said the chief; "she does not consider the glory she should gain by such an alliance. Remember the great tribe over which I am chief. Remember the comforts and luxuries that are within my tent, where I would make you mistress. Think of this before you decide."

"I have thought of them," said Rebecca, "and I still refuse."

The chief turned his tactics from persuasion to force. He said:

"Then if you are stubborn you must be compelled to be my bride. I would rather you would marry me of your own free will, but as you refuse I shall take you to my wigwam by force."

So saying, he advanced to the girl and lifted her frail body in his arms. He pressed his rude lips to her gentle rosy ones as he murmured many doating words. The girl struggled all her might, but she was powerless in the firm grasp of the savage, and she was maddened by the many taunts and yells that the hag indulged herself in at the sight of Rebecca's discomfiture.

Kingo-lake carried the girl from the tent as easily as if she had been an infant, and was taking rapid paces toward his wigwam. Rebecca still struggled in his arms, but her efforts were useless and the chief would but taunt her for her pains.

At last the door of the wigwam is reached. The chief raises his hand to draw aside the curtain, and the girl feels she has lost all hope in this world, and that death would now be a welcome visitor to her.

But see, what is that dark form that advances so silently behind them in the night. It is the figure of a tall man, and in his hand he held a long steel knife. By the time the chief reaches the wigwam door, the figure is standing close behind him.

The Indian raises his right hand to draw aside the curtain, and the figure raises his right hand that holds the dangerous knife.

The curtain is drawn, and in an instant the steel is driven to the hilt into the Indian's side.

The chief relaxed his hold, and both he and the girl fell to the ground. The Indian had received his death-blow, and breathed but a few minutes more. His face was drawn by pain into a horrible shape, and his open, staring, discolored eyeballs after life had left him were more than terrible to look upon. But he had received no more than his deserts, and such a fate should await all who would trample on youth and purity.

It was the hunter who had again rescued the girl, and it was he who bent over her as she lay on the ground where she had fallen, and whispered, in a low, hurried tone:

"Up, up, we have no time to lose. If we're discovered here, we die."

Rebecca rose mechanically and followed him. In her great bewilderment, she knew not what she was doing, or where she was. The hunter held her hand, and led her swiftly along the street of the village.

They had not gone far when they discovered a group of Indians advancing toward them. The hunter stopped suddenly and whispered to Rebecca:

"They must not see us. Your dress is covered with the Indian's blood, and it would instantly betray us. We will creep into this wigwam, where we may find safety."

The wigwam alluded to stood at a little distance from the rest, and had been for some time unoccupied. The hunter and Rebecca crept into this, and lay quite still.

They heard the Indians without laughing and shouting, and they grew impatient for them to move away.

But there were no signs of their doing so, for they seemed bent on having a midnight frolic, and they had chosen the spot before the wigwam as their frolicking ground.

At last the morning came, and with it came quiet.

The hunter peered cautiously without, then turning to Rebecca, he said:

"All appears to be quiet now, and I will go out and seek food. We must lie here quietly till night, then we may have a chance to escape."

He left the wigwam, and then as soon as he had gone Rebecca began to grow impatient for his return. There was something dreadful in staying there alone, and knowing at any moment the Indians might come in upon her, and then her death would be certain. The blood still remained upon her clothing, an immovable witness of the deed that had been perpetrated.

But the hunter did not return. Had he again deceived her as he had done once before. She could not think it, for she had brought herself to hold the hunter in almost the same relationship as she had held the murdered Kingsley. But the sun set, and the sun rose again, and still the hunter did not return.

Pale with her dread, weak with her hunger, but driven to the act by her desperation the next morning, the girl left the wigwam in search of food, and reckless whether she was captured or not.

She knew of a gentle-faced Indian woman, who dwelt in a wigwam not far distant. To this woman she determined to go and beg for food to sustain her life. She approached the wigwam and drew aside the curtain, expecting to surprise the Indian woman. But she did not. On the contrary, she was surprised herself, for instead of the Indian woman being there, the wigwam was occupied by two white men and a girl.

However, emboldened by her necessity, she advanced nevertheless. One of the men suddenly started from his seat and uttered a cry of joy and recognition. One glance, and Rebecca recognized him. She threw her arms towards heaven, then uttered a piercing scream and fell to the ground.

Had the dead arisen from the grave. The man whose presence had produced such an effect on her was Kingsley, the light house keeper, whom she had seen murdered two months before.

To explain this mystery, we must go back several months in this history and introduce some more important personages.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RESCUE.

THE day was fair, and the sea calm, and the good ship *Proserpine* went speedily on her journey to the golden harbor of San Francisco.

Among the passengers who had gathered on the deck, was an old gentleman of sixty winters or so, and his daughter, a fair sprightly girl of eighteen.

The gentleman was rather stout, fleshy and important. One who was evidently well-to-do in the world, and proud of his riches.

His daughter was the very opposite of her father. Indeed she might have had some pride of dress as all women have, but other pride she had none.

She was a very handsome girl; had dark glossy hair; laughing black eyes that seemed to say to every fellow they saw, "wouldn't you like to kiss me you rogue?" A white neck and shoulders that looked well in contrast with her dark hair and the dark dress that she wore.

Then she had such a pretty pair of arms; arms that she evidently gloried in, for she continually kept them uncovered; she was not selfish of them however, for they were most constantly found entwined around the neck of some male biped—be he a relative or otherwise.

"What do you suppose was the cause of that red light, captain?" asked Mr. Brighter (for that was the old gentleman's name). "Is there a light house situated in that region?"

"Why, papa," asked his daughter, "didn't you see the light house? It was shown as plain as daylight."

"Then I must confess I was too scared to look at it," said the old gentleman, "but if there was a light house there, what in thunder was the keeper about? What did he mean by not lighting the lamp instead of letting us sail right on top of those confounded rocks? What

did he mean, I say? Why, the man is a villain."

"Don't be too confident of that, my friend," said the captain. "I am acquainted with the keeper of the light house on the coast, and I know him to be an honest man. He has been so sick that he couldn't light the lamp, or else there has been foul play, and I strongly suspect the latter is the cause, for there is a gang of desperate men who live not far distant."

The captain was here called away by some of the crew, and Mr. Righter and his daughter were again left alone.

"Pa, pa!" said Julia, "what is this important business about George Gibson that brings us away out here to California. I know you have told me half a dozen times, but really I remember none of it."

"You're just like all the rest of the girls," responded Mr. Righter. "Talk to you of dressing or other tomfoolery, you're all ready enough to listen; but the minute a man opens his mouth on any useful subject, your ears are corked tighter than any demijohn."

"Come, come, papa," said Julia, "you are too harsh on our sex. But if you will tell me once more what this business is about, I'll promise faithfully to listen."

"Then listen," said her Pa, "and if you forget it this time I won't buy you a new bonnet for a year; see if I do. Know, then, obstinate girl, that George Gibson once had a mother."

"I expect he had," said Julia, saucily, "and a father too, perhaps. He could not well have done without them."

"Hush, my dear," said her Pa, reproving her; "what do you know about such matters at your age. Yes, George Gibson had a father, and a very queer father he was. His wife was once a beloved sister of mine. Poor girl," he continued, as he wiped a tear from his eye, "if she had married the man of my selection, instead of that miserable circus actor, she might have been living yet."

"Yes, but pa, pa!" said Julia, "you do not explain this business about George Gibson."

"You see George Gibson's mother had an uncle."

"Well, this uncle was a rich old codger who lived in England, but he became naturally so disgusted with Englishmen that when he died he very sensibly willed

the whole of his fortune to his nearest female American relative, George Gibson's mother."

"But, poor thing, she's dead, so she won't get it, after all."

"Yes, I expect she's dead," said Mr. Righter, sorrowfully; "at least, I've not heard of her for over fifteen years. But that brings me to George Gibson. The will said that if the nearest female American relative was not living, the fortune was to go to her oldest son, if he was living or if he had ever been born, and if he hadn't, the fortune was to go to the oldest daughter, if there was any. So, you see, George Gibson is the proper heir to the fortune, and for that reason, I came on this expedition to hunt him up."

"George never had any sister, had he papa?" asked Julia.

"Yes, my dear, he once had a sister; but her mother took her away one stormy day, and I have never seen either of them since."

"It would be strange if both the mother and child should appear some time unexpected, wouldn't it, papa?"

"Yes, my dear, very strange. But there goes the bell for supper. We must hurry. It is likely it is the last supper we'll eat on this ship."

So they went to supper, and the good ship went speeding on her journey.

* * * * *

It is a fine evening in June, 1849. The Proserpine had arrived in the noble harbor of San Francisco the night before, and a shabbily dressed young man of about twenty-two, who had a monopoly of the lighterage business of the port, is engaged with his scow landing her passengers and their luggage.

One of his scows, which he personally commanded, had been drawn up to the vessel's side, and a long flight of steps had been let down, on which the passengers were descending.

"Now, my dear," said an old gentleman on the ship to his daughter, who was preparing to descend to the scow, "be very careful. If I should lose you, it would be worse than if George Gibson lost his whole fortune."

"Oh, don't bother your old brains about me," said the young lady saucily. "If I do fall overboard, I am sure

my beauty would make every man on board of the ship willingly jump over to rescue me; so here I go, papa."

And she did go; farther than she expected too, however. She had no sooner got the words out of her mouth, than the swell of a small steamer passing by gave the scow a good shake, and that rocked the ladder and then the young lady toppled overboard.

All was confusion on board of the steamer.

The ladies screamed. The gentlemen yelled; while the young lady's papa howled "save her! save her!" But he could do no more. In the days of his youth he had neglected swimming, and now he was powerless to rescue his daughter from the briny deep.

Not so with the captain of the scow, however. That shabbily dressed gentleman, on witnessing the catastrophe, merely indulged in a prolonged whistle, dashed his hat to the deck, and then sprang overboard to the rescue.

It was not so easy a thing to accomplish however. A drowning cat in the water is frantic enough, but a woman is far worse. So the shabbily dressed captain found as he grasped the drowning young lady, and she seized him tightly by the neck drawing him too under the water. Things at last had arrived at their climax. The young lady was struggling harder than ever, and the young man seemed to be losing the power to keep them afloat. Every body expected the next minute to see both of them sink in the treacherous water, and still none offered to go to their rescue, for all knew the danger and none had the courage to attempt it.

But see, unobserved by the passengers, a small skiff is approaching the drowning persons. A wild wizard looking figure is seated in it, and skillfully handling the small feather-like oars.

Nearer, nearer comes the skiff, but its ghastly occupant must pull stronger or the drowning persons will sink beyond his grasp. See the young man seems to have given up all hope, and is stretching his arms towards the vessel as if imploring help; ceases struggling and prepares to sink forever.

But he don't sink. The skiff has now reached the spot, and the wizard-like figure bending over the side, firmly grasps each of the drowning persons and pulls them into his boat.

CHAPTER VIII.

A GLANCE AT THE PAST, AND A PEEP INTO THE FUTURE.

"WELL, well," said Mr. Brighter, when he and his daughter were comfortably established in their hotel in San Francisco, and Julia had quite recovered from the shock of falling into the water. "I always expected this would happen some day or other. Girls will continue running into mischief or the water. But anyhow it will learn you a lesson, Julia, never despise your dear papa, when he tells you to beware of danger."

"I did not despise your warning papa," answered Julia. "As it was, one joyful circumstance arose from the adventure."

"What was that?" inquired her papa.

"Why, I allude to that handsome young man that rescued me from the water."

"Yes, he was handsome," remarked her papa sarcastically. "Why, my dear, on the honor of a gentleman I counted ten of his toes visible through the uppers of his boots."

"What of that, papa? Cannot a man be handsome without having to support half a dozen tailors and shoemakers?" asked his daughter. "Now I consider myself a judge of manly beauty, and I consider that young man a very good species of it."

"No, no, daughter, you are entirely wrong in your ideas of manly beauty," said her father, drawing himself proudly up; "now if that young man had been more of my build, if he had more capacity to hold food about him, you might have come nearer the mark. As it is I maintain that he is not at all handsome."

"Well, if he is not handsome, he is at least brave, and if he'll have me I intend to marry him."

Her papa could not speak at first, he was so completely taken aback by astonishment. At last he recovered by degrees, then indulged in a whistle, then exclaimed, as he fell back on the sofa, completely overcome:

"What did you say?"

"I said I was going to ask him to marry me," said his

daughter, laughing at his surprise. "You don't expect I intend to live a maiden all my life; do you?"

"But—you—wouldn't—marry—such—a—ragged—vagabond has that!" exclaimed Mr. Righter, solemnly emphasising every syllable.

"I don't remember him as a vagabond, papa," answered his daughter, spiritedly. "I can only think of him as the gallant young fellow, who jumped into the water to rescue me, while the rest of you ninnies remained motionless with terror."

"But, my dear," said her pa, "while you are praising the brave, why don't you mention that eccentric individual in the skiff? But for him both of you would have been drowned."

"I am very thankful to him, indeed, papa, but I am sure I wouldn't like to marry him, even if he made a practice of rescuing me every day of his life. He looked more like a demon than a man."

"Yes, my dear, he was a very odd-looking individual, but the oddest of all was the strange manner in which he disappeared," said Mr. Righter.

"While we were carrying you back to the vessel, from the skiff, as you lay unconscious, the man or demon, whichever he was, just pulled one or two rapid strokes with his oars, and before a person could exclaim John Robinson! both he and the skiff had disappeared. However, we are very thankful to him, whoever he was, and if he ever shows his face to me he shall be richly rewarded."

"Now, my daughter," continued the old gentleman, as he prepared to leave the room, "I hope you can make yours lf comfortable for a few minutes, for I want to go out and make some inquiries respecting the whereabouts of George Gibson."

The old gentleman had not left the room long when Julia heard a gentle tap at the door. She was greatly surprised, on answering, to find her rescuer standing there.

There was a great alteration in his appearance. His shabby dress had disappeared. Now he was arrayed in a suit of rich cloth, cut in the latest fashion.

The young persons appeared very glad to meet again.

He bestowed such an earnest glance on Julia that the young lady blushed for a moment.

"You must not blame me for not sending a servant to

announce my visit, he said, "for it was not my fault. I could not find a servant anywhere."

Julia replied that he was welcome. It did not matter in what manner he made his visit.

He came in the room, and, at her request, seated himself on the sofa.

She sat beside him, and turning toward him in her attractive way, was the first to begin the conversation.

"I am sorry I occasioned you so much trouble," she remarked. "I hope you did not catch cold by your adventure the other day."

He laughed gaily, and replied:

"Oh, no; the water seems to agree with gentlemen of my craft."

"But not in such large doses, perhaps."

"I do not mind the quantity of the dose, if there is such a large sugar-plum with it as the rescuing of a pretty girl."

She smiled sweetly, and looked at the carpet.

"You are flattering. I must confess."

"Not in the least," he replied, gallantly; "but of course you are so used to praises from all men that you regard the whole of it as flattery. I assure you I am quite sincere."

She felt sure of it, but she did not say so.

"Are you sure you do not say the same to every lady you meet?"

"I must admit I do say something like it to the really pretty ones."

Julia did not like this so well. She would rather he had admitted her to be one of the choice exceptions. So she changed the conversation.

"That is a confidence, and I suppose I should keep it in secret, or you may fall out of favor with the ladies. Your honesty is to your merit though."

"But there is one confidence you have not confided to me yet," she continued.

He looked interested, and asked:

"What is that?"

"You have not told me your name yet."

"Pray pardon my remissness," he said laughingly. "I had no intention of keeping it a secret. My name is George Brainard."

"A very pretty name. I suppose you know mine, so there is no need of telling it to you."

He replied that there was not, as he was so happy as to know her name.

"You have complimented me on my honesty," he said. "I hope you include my truth as well."

"I came here to answer an advertisement, but I was embarrassed in delivering it."

Both of them laughed heartily at this.

"You can't mean you came to answer the advertisement in reference to George Gibson?"

"I did," was the reply.

"Are you acquainted with George?"

"Slightly."

This reply was given in rather an indifferent voice, as if the speaker did not set much value on the acquaintance.

"Then, perhaps you are a Philadelphian? George is from Philadelphia."

"No, I came from Ohio."

"Pardon my curiosity," she said. "Where did you meet him?"

"I first met him while in the army in Mexico. I had enlisted in an Ohio regiment. George belonged to a Pennsylvania one. By some circumstance he was transferred to our regiment, and put in the company of which I was an officer."

"Then you became friends together?"

He seemed to hesitate for a moment, but presently replied.

"No, we never formed a very close friendship. A disagreeable circumstance occurred in the City of Mexico, a short time after the war, that will ever preclude us from being friends."

He looked as if he would rather say no more on the subject. Julia noticed it and kindly changed the conversation.

The old gentleman soon returned, and bowed politely on seeing a well dressed stranger engaged with his daughter, and begged pardon for interrupting them.

"You should rather beg pardon," said Julia, "for not offering him thanks in my behalf."

"Why should I thank the gentleman," he asked bluntly. "I am not aware that he has ever done any service to either you or I."

The young people raised a shout at this, and the old gentleman looking very perplexed, inquired what they meant.

"Why, don't you recognize him?" inquired Julia, "this is the same gentleman that rescued me."

"You can't make me believe that," said Mr. Righter, "for that chap had the queerest pair of boots that was ever made."

George was about to explain what made the change in his appearance, when all parties were interrupted by a servant who came to announce that a visitor wished to see Mr. Righter.

"Show him up, show him up," said that gentleman, then added as the servant disappeared, "maybe it is somebody who knows of the whereabouts of George Gibson."

"You needn't go very far if you wish to gain that information," said George Brainard, "for to tell you of George Gibson was my business here."

"I heard you wished information of George Gibson, and as I know of his whereabouts I came to tell you."

"Well, sir, where does George live?"

"About one hundred miles from here."

The speaker was not George Brainard, as the reader may suppose, but a rather odd looking personage, who had just entered the room, unnoticed by any of them.

As I said, he was an odd-looking personage. Odd, not only in his dress, but in his features. He appeared to be a pedlar, for on one of his arms he carried one of those large baskets, usually carried by that class of persons.

The general appearance of his features denoted a man cunning as the fox and brave as the lion. A man evidently used to perils, and one on whom danger of the worst description could make no strong impression.

"About one hundred miles from here," he repeated, as the others continued to gaze at him wonder-struck.

"And who in the mischief do you call yourself?" asked Mr. Righter recovering from his surprise. "You stalk into my room like some prowling ghost!"

"The servant told me you were ready to receive me," was the reply.

"Oh, ho! you are the visitor, are you?" said Mr. Righter astonished. "I thought some gentleman was

waiting to see me. I little expected it was a rigged peddler."

"You are insulting," said the stranger, "but I don't mind that however. I have received so many insults during my life that they have become a pleasure to me."

So saying, he placed a chair in the middle of the floor and sat down. Then as if not noticing the others he took from his sample basket five large quart bottles filled with some bluish liquor, and (at least it appeared so to them) drank the contents of each.

"Stop, stop, man!" said Mr. Richter, expecting to see the man drop dead at his feet; "do you want to kill yourself?"

"Kill myself I ha, ha, ha!" laughed the other; "that's but a sip. I drink twenty of those bottles of my liquor at every meal."

"Why, what in thunder do you call yours if?" gasped Mr. Richter, now thoroughly frightened. "You ain't 'old horny toes,' are you?"

"Sometimes I imagine I am," said the other, laughing demonically at the fright of the others. Perhaps you will be more firmly convinced that I am when you see some of my performances."

Then without speaking another word, and while the others continued to gaze silently at him, for in their fright they were unable to speak, he moved near to the small grate, where a bright coal fire was burning, and seizing one of the reddest of the burning coals actually devoured it.

The man demon then took a small vial from his pocket, filled with a bright red liquor and threw the contents on the fire, which action soon turned everything in the room to a reddish cast. Immediately after doing that, he took a neatly folded paper from his pocket, and threw it on the floor, where it began to writhe and twist like a person does when in great pain, and finally began to advance, in which it was joined by all the chairs and tables.

The red light burnt on brightly, and the room soon became like one mass of flames. The letter, the chairs, and the tables still kept up their infernal dance, while the living occupants had lost all sense of waking and had sunk into a troubled sleep. But the red glare in the room and the infernal being who caused it still seemed before them.

Presently, however, the red color seemed to change to a deep grey, and the mysterious being began to fade slowly before their eyes.

After a time, everything but themselves and the mass of gray had disappeared, and then a picture began to form—a picture that was encased between the masses of gray vapor.

It was a picture of a plainly furnished room—or rather it was so plain it seemed more like the room itself than a picture of it. The room had two occupants, a man and a young girl, who seemed to be sitting very lovingly together. Presently there was a third figure entered the room. This was a man in a red shirt, who wore a mask, and who held a long dagger in his hand. This man advanced stealthily to the other, and while the other was conversing with the girl he plunged his dagger deep into his breast.

The first man then falls mortally wounded, while the girl utters a piercing scream, and the mask falls from the face of the intruder, and discovers the murderer to be George Gibson.

The picture and the clouds then both disappeared and Mr. Righter and the others awoke.

There were no traces of what had occurred. The peddler had disappeared. The room looked the same as it had ever looked. The chairs and tables were in their places, and the astonished persons were beginning to think they all had had a ridiculous dream when they discovered the neatly folded paper that had been indulging in a dance still lying on the centre of the floor.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STORY OF THE PAST.

GEORGE BRAINARD was the first to recover his senses. He picked the letter from the floor and read it aloud.

It was written in a plain, neat hand, and read as follows:

“Henry Kingsley, the keeper of the Light House at H—, was nearly murdered on the 10th instant, by

George Gibson, a desperado from the Eastern States. Gibson escaped to the mountains, but was afterwards captured by a band of Indians. Kingsley's daughter, whom Gibson abducted on the night of the murder, was also made captive by the Indians. "You have asked for information. In my way I have given it. You will learn more at Kingsley's house."

This was all. The letter bore no signature.

"Rather a curious letter," remarked Mr. Righter. "I don't believe a word of it."

"What! after all you have seen, papa?" asked Julia.

"I could believe anything after that right."

"I am afraid the letter speaks true," said George Brainard. "I believe Gibson could be guilty of the crime, and ——"

"What, what!" cried Mr. Righter, in alarm; "this will never, never do. Are you aware, sir, that George Gibson is my nephew?"

"I would not alter my opinion, if he was my own brother," was the response. "I would still believe him capable of the crime. Poor girl! poor girl!"

George had begun to pace the room as in great agony. Mr. Righter gazed at him a moment in great astonishment, then exclaimed:

"What do you mean by poor girl, I should like to know? You had better say 'poor old man.' I am sure I have George's interests far more at heart than Julia has."

"I was not speaking of Julia," was the reply. "I was speaking of the poor girl mentioned in the letter."

"Well, you need not take on so about it, I am sure, young man. You are not acquainted with the lady. What are her troubles to you?"

"What are her troubles to me? Her troubles are my troubles. What injures her injures me. When her life ceases, I pray heaven mine may cease also. The words of the poet would well apply to us:

Two lives that are forever joined,
Two hearts that beat as one."

"Mr. Brainard," said the old man, "I wish to speak to you in private—please follow this way." They entered the adjoining room, and the old man locked the door, on which they entered and drew two chairs to the window of the room furthest from it, and began:

"By your conversation this evening I gather that you are on intimate terms with this Kingsley and his daughter."

"I am; and I hope some day to be on still more intimate terms."

"Do you know anything of the former history of either of them?"

"I do not. At least my knowledge does not extend over the space of five years."

"You do not know anything of Kingsley's wife. Is she still living?"

"No; I believe she is long since dead, but there is some mystery connected about her. I have often inquired about the date and manner of her death but I can get no satisfactory answer."

"You mentioned Kingsley being engaged as a mechanic while living in New York. Do you know what was his trade?"

"He was a plasterer."

Mr. Richter seemed engaged for a few moments in deep reflection. At last he said:

"It must be the same."

George by this time thought it was his turn to put a few questions, so he said:

"By these questions I am led to think you have had some acquaintance with Mr. Kingsley."

The old gentleman hesitated a moment before answering.

"Yes. I am pretty certain I have heard of this Kingsley before, but I cannot say I have been personally acquainted, for I have never seen him (as I know of) in my life. There is a story connected with their lives."

George looked, as if he would like to hear it, and the old gentleman continued:

"I don't know as I ought to tell you. You are a stranger to me and of course have no right to pry into family secrets; but then you seem to be one of the Kingsley family (or at least you intend to be) and they are as deeply concerned as me. So I will tell it."

Then turning to George confidentially, he continued;

"Some twenty years ago, I had an only sister, who was married to a man I disliked. I opposed the marriage, but it was consummated. I opposed my sister's living with her husband, but she continued to live with him. My efforts to part them were futile, but a circum-

stance occurred that was more powerful than anything I could do or say."

"What was this circumstance?"

"A disclosure of a murder."

"Murder!" George opened his eyes at their widest, and his ears were strained to their farthest extent of hearing, while his face assumed an expression of intense curiosity. What a charm that word "murder," or anything connected with it has on poor humanity.

"Yes, murder; and with it commences my story. My sister before her marriage was a very charming person, and possessed many traits of physical beauty. She knew she was beautiful and she was proud of it. Her position in society was that of a flirt and of course she had many admirers. James Gibson who afterwards married her was one of these. Another was a doctor, at that time quite celebrated as a physician, and for his armours among the other sex. His name was Layman, and he was a married man.

"As time went on Gibson was married to her, and he took her to his home. He made his living by performing in the circus, and at other places of public amusement.

"He was what is popularly called a conjurer. I have stated that I did not like him. I should have said that I did not like his profession. I was not well enough acquainted with the man to form either an attachment or a dislike to him."

"Was it he who committed the murder?"

"Pray, don't be in a hurry, I'll reach the murder in time. After the marriage had been consummated, and they had retired to their new home, the other suitor, the married one, Dr. Laymen, still continued to visit the bride:

"Of course the husband remonstrated, but his remonstrances were of no avail. The doctor continued his visits and it soon occasioned scandal. But at last he could come no more. On a cold night one December, he was found dead on the sidewalk. He had been murdered while returning from a visit to some patients."

"Was Gibson suspected of the murder?"

"He was not. It was well known that he was absent from the city at that time, so no suspicions were aroused. And it was several years before the murderer disclosed himself. Then it was known that Gibson had done the deed.

"Did he confess?"

"He did. He made a confession, but not to the magistrate. The murder harrassed him so that he could no longer keep it a secret. He wished another person to share the dreadful secret with him. In an evil hour for himself he chose his wife as that person. At first she seemed to pity him and share the confidence. But she was a deceitful creature. At the very moment when he thought he could most trust her, she admitted the officers of justice to his private room and betrayed him.

"Was he captured?"

"No, it was here his profession aided him. Besides being a conjuror, he was a celebrated gymnast. The room where he slept was three story above the ground. This jump to nine hundred and ninety-nine men out of a thousand, would have been instant death. Gibson was the thousandth man, and he performed the jump in safety and so escaped."

"I understood you to say Gibson was absent on the night of the murder?"

"I should have said, he was supposed to be absent." After the confession, witnesses were found who had seen him in the city that night, but for some reasons had not told it."

"Have you ever heard of Gibson since his escape?"

"Never," answered the old gentleman; there were many surmises as to where he had gone, but no correct ones. Some supposed he had gone to Italy and there joined the Brigands, while others supposed he had sought the mountain fastnesses of his own country."

"And what became of your sister, Gibson's wife?"

"It is there the history comes in which may deeply concern you and the Kingsley family. But listen, I hear Julia approaching the door. I have reasons why she should hear none of this conversation. Wait till another opportunity and I'll explain all."

Julia was admitted, and it was decided that the three of them should start for Kingsley's light house.

It was a long distance from San Francisco to the light house, and as the journey had to be performed by the tedious method of the old connestoga wagons, it took many days to accomplish it.

At last the destination was reached.

They immediately sojourned to the light house. They half doubted the contents of the letter, and they were

surprised to behold the condition of the keeper, as he came to the door when they knocked. He was not dead indeed, but the marks of his wounds were still there. His face was bound up with cloths, and his body showed many signs of ill usage.

CHAPTER X.

THE BURNING HOUSE.

WHEN the villains left the light house with their fair captive, they supposed the keeper was quite dead. They were mistaken.

He became conscious after a while, and during many days was ministered to by some unknown friend, who bandaged his wound, brought him food, books, etc., when until visited by George Brainard and his two companions, as described in the preceding chapter, he was able to take care of himself.

George Brainard listened with horror to the light-house keeper's account of his encounter with the would-be murderer.

He enquired eagerly concerning the abduction of Rebecca, but on this head old Kingsley could give him no satisfaction, as he was lying senseless on the floor when the girl was forced away.

"One thing is certain," said Mr. Righter, after he had heard the narration, "you have had a marvellous escape. You owe your life to the mysterious chap with the victuals, whoever he was. He seems to be as mysterious as the pedlar that visited us and set us on your track."

Mr. Kingsley inquired what he meant, and then followed a long narration on the part of Mr. Righter of the events at the hotel that have already been described.

"It is strange," said Mr. Kingsley, after he had listened attentively. "Who can this mysterious being be, who has thus invisibly befriended me. By what you have told me, it seems he has more powers than usually fall to the lot of men. Some would call him a demon, but I am more strongly inclined to term him an angel."

"Well, he does not look like an angel, in spite of his

attempt to eat all the red-hot coals in the grate," said Mr. Righter. "But don't you think it would be better for you to leave this place, and go and live with some of your neighbors until you get well?"

"I did think of doing so, but all my neighbors live at too great a distance. Besides the light—you know—the light."

"What's the matter with the light?"

"I mean the light at the top. I consider it a sacred trust, and how many lives may have been perrilled while I have been lying here sick."

"Perhaps your invisible friend who brought the victuals was so good as to light the lamp for you," proposed George Brainard.

"I hope so," responded Kingsley, "and I expect some day to find he has."

"You need not trouble yourself about the light now," said Mr. Righter. "George, here, will stay and tend the light for you, while Julia—who is worth a dozen men—and I will accompany you to the nearest neighbors, whoever they may be."

After some consultation, this proposal was acted upon, and Mr. Kingsley and the other two prepared for their journey, while it was decided George Brainard should remain behind and attend to the lamps.

They were soon on their journey, and pursued it without interruption until the evening twilight came on at the farmhouse of the Jackson's, the nearest neighbors of Mr. Kingsley. Let us peep into the house, and what do we see?

There is Farmer Jackson himself, as strong and hearty at sixty-five as many are at half that age, sitting by his open fireside, and on his left, half-leaning on him, sits his wife, twenty years younger than he. She is short, stout, good-humored, and seldom idle, but when helping her lord to enjoy his smoke in the evening.

There were four sisters gathered around that fire, and their ages were respectively twenty-three, nineteen, eighteen, and seventeen. Their names were Laura, Lizzie, Carry, and Fanny. These sisters were engaged in conversation.

Now, whoever heard of four pretty young ladies talking together five minutes and not alluding to the gentlemen? The thing is impossible. That delightful subject

of matrimony will stalk in between their subjects, somehow or other.

So it was in this case. From talking of sausages, in an instant they turned to talk of jewelry, and from jewelry the conversation changed to matrimony.

"Oh, the thing is certain," said Lizzie, "she has all the clothing prepared, and the ring is already bought."

"Who bought the ring, I wonder," inquired Fannie, the youngest sister, innocently.

"Who bought the ring? Why, he did, of course. You don't expect the ladies to stand any expense. They have trouble enough, I am sure, after they are married, without their standing the expense of courtship."

"Lizzie, Lizzie," said their mother, reprovingly, to the daughter who had last spoke. "How can you talk so?"

"Why, what have I said mother?" inquired Lizzie.

"You said the women have all the trouble after marriage. It is no such thing. I have been a married woman now for twenty-five years, and I am willing to swear in any witness-box what a happy life it is. Trouble indeed," continued the good lady, as she rubbed her nose angrily, "that is the cry of the pretended reformers of our sex—old maids or cross-grained widows, but never the good wives of the country. Ask any of the experienced matrons who enjoy marriage the most, they or their husbands, and the answer will be, in every case: 'They do.'"

"Dear wife," said the farmer, as he lovingly put his arm around her neck, "in almost everything I can agree with you, but in these sentiments I cannot. I can never be led to believe that any heart could more fully realize the blessings of our union than mine does. For many years you have been my heart, my soul, my life. My every trouble has found a full sympathy in your breast; and then these children, the fragile flowers that we have nursed till they reached the full richness of the summer's bloom, do not I owe to you? My house, my lands, my children, none of these could I have had if you had not taken pity on me twenty-five years ago, when I came to your father's house and told you how solitary I was, and you——"

Here Mrs. Jackson stopped her husband's mouth with her hand, and exclaimed, as her face became diffused with the honest joy her heart felt:

"Oh, do stop, John; you'll set the girls crazy. They're bad enough now about the men without us making them worse."

The girls laughed heartily at this, and Lizzie said "I hope mother would not prevent us talking about matrimony."

"Yes," said her mother, "I would talk about any kind of money but that. Ever since it got noised about that John Brainard had asked Rebecca Kingsley to be his wife, you girls have talked of nothing but marriage! marriage! marriage!"

Lizzie was about to reply to this, but her father interrupted her by holding his finger to his lips as a token of silence.

"Hush," he said, "stop this clatter a moment. Is not that the sound of a wagon approaching the house?"

Mr. Jackson advanced to the porch, followed by his family, and they looked down the lane that led to the broad road. A wagon had entered the lane, and was now approaching the house.

"Why, holloa," shouted Mr. Jackson, as Kingsley got from the wagon and approached the house. "Where have you been hiding yourself for the last century, man?"

Then noticing the damaged condition of Kingsley's face, he continued. "I guess you've been having a severe toothache—haven't you?"

Kingsley gazed at him a moment in great astonishment, then recovering himself, he shouted, "Toothache! I've been getting murdered!"

"Murdered!" echoed the farmer, and the word was echoed down to almost his latest descendant.

"Yes, murdered," said Kingsley, as he advanced nearer. "Some villains have been trying to murder me, but what is worse, they have abducted my daughter."

"Abducted Rebecca!" shouted the former, and this was echoed as before.

The family then gathered around him with all manner of questions, but he told them to be patient till he had brought his two friends into the house.

Julia had already jumped from the wagon, and her father was slowly following her. It was arranged that the wagoner should return to the light house and keep George Brainard company, so he turned his team around, and drove off again down the lane.

The whole party soon returned again to the Great Room, and Mr. Kingsley introduced his two friends to the family.

The demand for information still continuing, Mr. Kingsley was compelled to accede to it and narrate his adventures. When he came to the abduction of Rebecca he could not speak, for the tears that had welled up in his throat and choked him.

These adventures led to a narrative by Mr. Righter, of what befel him at the hotel, with the pedlar, and of Julia's and Brainard's rescue from drowning by an equal mysterious person.

"Do you know, papa," said Julia, "what I was thinking of, when the pedlar was eating them red hot coals, and the chairs, table and yourself were cutting capers around me."

"Why, I suppose you were too frightened to think of anything at all."

"No; I was thinking what an ugly husband he would make. I was comparing him with our other guest."

There was a general shout at this, and Mr. Righter remarked:

"I half-believe the girl. I do believe it would take some great danger to change any of their thoughts from men or marriage."

"Then what are we here for, if not to get married?" asked Julia. "It is a good thing we do take to marriage, for what would the men do if we didn't?"

Julia was fully supported in her remarks upon marriage by the rest of the girls. They formed a sort of caucus and retired to one corner of the room, where they held a general consultation on weddings in general, and on Rebecca Kingsley's wedding in particular. There were many expressions of pity that Rebecca should be carried off when in a few days she would have been a happy bride, and many exclamations of wonder what had become of her. Then the girls took out their several pocket-handkerchiefs and indulged in a good cry. Abuse them as we will, the articles "girls" are the gentlest, sweetest, and the most tender-hearted creatures that were ever invented.

The evening was passed rather agreeably at Jackson's by both family and guests. At ten o'clock old Kingsley and Righter were shown a garret room, and Julia found quarters with the girls of the house.

They had been in bed an hour or so, and Mr. Righter had sunk into a refreshing sleep, but Kingsley could not sleep, for his wounds pained him somewhat. He was lying awake, and his mind was harrassed thinking of the probable fate of Rebecca.

Presently he thought he could smell smoke. In a few moments he was certain of it. Could the house be on fire?

He was on the point of getting from bed and ascertaining, when he was startled by a loud shout in the yard.

The noise was so great, it awakened all the inmates of the house.

"What on earth is the matter?" cried Mr. Righter, jumping from the bed and following Kingsley to the window.

"Indians is the matter," replied the other. "The house is surrounded by Indians. They have fired the house, and in a few minutes we will be at their mercy. The whole lower part of the house is on fire."

"I can feel that, sir" said Mr. Righter, who had somewhat recovered. "This floor is getting like a hot iron. What are we to do?"

"There is but one thing to be done," said Kingsley. "We cannot remain here to be burnt. We must trust our lives to the mercies of those Indians."

"But, how are we to get out?" asked the farmer. "We cannot get out by the lower part of the house, for that is all ablaze; and a jump from these high windows would be certain death."

Kingsley said they must escape by tying the blankets together, thus forming a sort of rope by which they could lower themselves to the ground.

Mr. Righter was the next to try the attempt; holding Julia by his side as he did so. They had descended safely till their feet nearly reached the ground, when those below discovered the flames had burnt away the frame side of the house, and had now reached the blankets. Before those above could make an attempt to get from the window, the blankets were ablaze, and all hopes of escape for them were cut off.

It was with a dreadful horror that the two white men who had escaped from the flames now gazed upon the victims in the burning building. They could be seen formed around their father who was offering to Heav-

en a prayer. They knew their fate and determined to die as they had lived—together.

Their death soon came. The burning floor tottered with its living weight, then gave away, and the unhappy victims then sank into the mass of flames where the prisoners outside could see them no more.

Here was terrible food for reflection for Kingsley and his companions, but the prisoners had no time for reflection. Their savage captors bound them and hurried them away.

All that night and all the next day, and all the night following the prisoners hurried on their journey. Onward, onward, always onward. No time for rest, scarce time for food. The Indians were evidently afraid of pursuit, and were anxious to join their tribe whose encampment lay many miles from the place of capture.

At last the Indian village was reached. It was early in the morning when they first entered it. Kingsley and his companions were shown to a tent which was to be their prison for the time being. In a short time a squaw entered with some breakfast and they were busily engaged at this meal, when Rebecca Kingsley came in so suddenly and surprised them.

CHAPTER XL

THE TORTURE STAKE.

WHEN Rebecca recovered from her fainting fit she found the young girl bathing her head, while the two men knelt by with very anxious and serious expressions of countenance.

"See, she recovers," said Mr. Richards, wiping his

forehead. "I would rather loose my scalp than see such a pretty young creature in such a fix."

Kingsley did not answer him, but bent over the prostrate form of the girl.

"Rebecca," he said. "You must not be afraid. I was not killed, only wounded."

She seemed reassured, and threw her arm over his neck, but said nothing.

Kingsley gently lifted her to a sitting position, while Julia still kept near her, and showed her anxiety to alleviate the poor girl's distress.

When Rebecca was sufficiently composed, Kingsley told her of his wonderful nurse, and how he had recovered from the wounds that the ruffian had inflicted. He then inquired how she came by the blood on her dress, and then came Rebecca's turn to narrate her adventures.

The conversation went on for a time briskly and not unpleasantly, notwithstanding their dangerous position as captives in the hands of cruel savages. It was brought to a close however, by the sudden appearance among them of George Gibson, in the rude and tawdry costume of an Indian chief. His face and hands were covered with red paint, and he wore a profusion of such cheap jewelry as is supplied to the Indians by the agents of the government. He at once recognized his uncle, Mr. Righter, and his cousin Julia, and instead of acting friendly towards them, he assumed the domineering, fierce attitude of an offended Indian chief.

"I am your nephew," prompted Gibson. "I am George Gibson, your long-lost nephew. The one you packed off to California to get rid of, but who turns up to you now like a bad penny. Then I was dependant on you for support, and I cursed you for it; now you are dependent on me for life, and I'll make you curse me for it."

Mr. Righter's surprise was too great to speak for a few moments. He had no idea that he should find Gibson in the character of an Indian chief, for Rebecca had not yet told him what had become of her abductor. He put the best face possible on matters, however, and tried to conciliate his nephew.

"Why George, old fellow," he said, advancing and proffering his hand, which was refused. "How happy I am to see you."

"Oh, stow that," said his nephew,

"How in the world came you here?" inquired the uncle.

"I might ask that question. What brought you here?"

Mr. Righter was about to tell of the fortune, but he was interrupted by his daughter. Julia crept close to her father and whispered:

"Don't tell him. He's not worthy of the fortune."

"But I must, my dear. It may save our scalps."

Then, turning to Gibson, he told him of the errand he had come on, and of the large fortune to which Gibson was heir.

"Well, what is this fortune to me?" he inquired. "I suppose you think I'd turn white again to secure it?"

"Of course I do," said Mr. Righter. "And I suppose you will set us all free for bringing it to you."

"Will I? We'll see about that. I can't think of setting you free while you have so many pretty girls amongst you. I suppose this is Julia. Come here, my dear, and kiss me. Well, if you won't, I'll take one myself."

He advanced and took Julia in his arms. Mr. Righter was afraid to offer even a word of resistance, but not so with Kingsley. With one blow of his brawny fist, before the miscreant could touch the girl, Kingsley had laid him out at his feet.

"Take that, you worse than savage, and remember there are plenty more blows in waiting for any red devil of you all that dare to harm either of these girls."

Gibson's first impulse on being struck, was to feel for his knife. He had it half drawn from its sheath when his mind seemed to change, and he let it drop back again.

"No," he said, "I'll not kill you. I came too near doing it once. A more horrible death awaits you."

Kingsley now recognized him. He advanced menacingly toward him.

"You may well drop your knife," he said. "You dare not commit the second murder."

"But I dare betray you into hands that will burn your flesh from your bones. And only one thing remains between you all and the torture stake."

"What is that thing?"

"That this girl whom you call your daughter, consents to live with me in my wigwam."

"Remember I am her father; it may be dangerous to go too far."

"And it may be dangerous to carry blood on your dress when the Indians are seeking the murderer of their chief."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean unless Rebecca Kingsley consents to my proposal to-night shall see her tortured at the stake, while her friends shall look on at her anguish. I give her two hours to decide, and warn her to decide well."

So saying, he rushed from the wigwam, leaving the occupants filled with a dreadful fear, for they knew he was capable of carrying out his threats.

The two hours passed by, and Gibson called to know Rebecca's answer.

He received it in plain terms.

Rebecca refused to submit to his demands.

"Well, if that is your decision you must not blame me for the consequences."

So saying he left the wigwam, and did not return in, but they soon heard the fierce yells of approaching savages.

Gibson had betrayed Rebecca to them and they were coming for their victim.

They reached the wigwam, and all its occupants were seized and bound.

"Revenge, revenge on the murderers of King-go-lake" they shouted.

"Carry the bloody maiden to the stake. Burn her! Burn her!"

With these shouts they advanced to the stake.

Rebecca was quickly bound to it and the wood was piled around her.

The chief orders the other maiden to die with her. "Tie her to the stake," shouted a savage.

"Yes, yes, tie her to the stake."

"Stop!" shouted Mr. Righter; "I'll divide my fortune among you if you spare my daughter's life."

"We want no talk from old big belly," said a savage-looking Indian, "tie the other maiden to the stake."

So Julia was seized again by the savages, and tied by Rebecca's side.

The piles of sticks and underbrush were set ablaze, and the flames were fast approaching the girls.

Most of their clothing had been torn from them before

they were tied to the stake, leaving them almost nude. Their skin, therefore, soon felt the effects of the scorching heat.

The flames approach nearer. They will soon reach the girls' quivering flesh.

The whites stand by, bound, helpless, and horror-struck, but the Indians rejoice.

The bright glow of the fire illumines the faces of all, and a terrible and grand scene it is.

The Indians dance around the fire like madmen, filling the air with their cries.

But there is another cry raised.

A loud, unearthly cry, that comes from the neighboring forest.

Every eye is turned in that direction, and every cheek is blanched with terror.

For from the forest comes the figure, not of a man, but of a demon.

From his head glows two glaring eyes of fire.

The Indians shrink back in terror, but the fiery figure advances.

It approaches the flames and rushes through them to the girls' side.

It cuts the ropes that bind them.

Now the Indians discover the trick, for the figure throws away the lighted calabash he had held before his face.

They find the supposed demon is none other than the hunter who had escaped from them the day before.

With a yell, the Indians recover, and rush fiercely at him.

But they are too late.

The hunter has seized the girls, one in each arm, and is now running swiftly toward the forest.

The Indians pursue him, but no man in that country can keep pace with the mysterious, swift-footed hunter.

Faster and faster he runs, till they seem to be flying through the air. Now they can hear the loud roar of the cataract that lies in the river they are so fastly approaching.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HERMIT'S SON.

CLASPING both the girls in his arms, the hunter still ran on swiftly toward the river. The river lay at some distance from the Indian village, and had to be crossed, as the only refuge from their pursuers was on the other side.

The night was quite dark and very little could be seen, but the hunter seemed to know his way well, and kept on in nearly a straight track.

They could plainly hear the yells and shouts of their pursuers, but the sounds seemed to gradually diminish as the hunter advanced.

At last the river is reached.

It is a fierce stream, and the waters roar terribly as they pass over the hidden rocks that obstructed their passage.

But it must be crossed, and crossed quickly, or the Indian's grasp will be again on them.

The hunter knows this, and here resolves to rather trust his life with the angry waters than with the angry red men.

He firmly advances to the cataract.

The girls now know his intention and they tremble fearfully.

He intends to cross that fearful cataract by the few stones that show above the water's surface, and serve as steps for his feet.

He implores them to be calm, as he is capable of performing the feat.

Now the shouts of the Indians are heard quite near, and the hunter has not a moment to spare.

He boldly advances on the cataract, and is making his way swiftly over the stream.

Some of the stones are far apart, and the hunter has to make fearful jumps to cross the intervening space.

Sometimes his foot slips, and he falls into the water, but he soon recovers, and advances as swiftly as before.

The Indians have reached the shore of the river, but the darkness renders the forms of the fugitives invisible.

They think no man could cross that fearful cataract, especially on such a dark night, and they give up their search as hopeless.

They retrace their steps with downcast looks. These prisoners have escaped them, but they will have their revenge on the others.

At last the cataract is crossed, and the hunter and the girls stand safely on the opposite shore.

"We are out of their reach now," said the hunter, "but we must be far distant from this place by morning, or the redskins will get us again."

So the journey was again resumed, this time not so hastily as before, and the two ladies walked instead of being carried—nevertheless, they went on very rapidly.

The hunter seemed to know his way well, so the darkness of the night did not offer so very serious an impediment to their swift progress.

After crossing the river, the hunter, finding that he was for a short time safe, provided a meal for himself and his two companions, and then renewed their journey, which they pursued with little interruption for two days. At the end of this time they arrived at the Hunter's Cave.

It was quite a narrow room, the walls and ceiling were of solid rock, a natural cavern, but much improved by the hand of man.

"Now girls," said the hunter, "you must make yourselves comfortable here for a short time. I will leave you here in company with some victuals while I go to seek reinforcements and rescue your friends."

"And who may you call yourself to be living in such a home as this?" inquired Julia.

"I am he whose name you have often heard, but whom men think never existed. I am called a spirit."

"A spirit," laughed Julia, in which she was joined by Rebecca. "We have been through too many perils to be frightened by such a story as that."

"Nevertheless the story is true," said the hunter. "Men call me the Invisible Hermit."

"What!" cried Rebecca, "do I owe my many escapes to onewhose very name I have often trembled at?"

"You do. See what it is to be frightened at nothing. I don't think your own father could have been kinder to you."

We left Kingsley and Righter captives in the hands of the Indians. They expected instant death when the Indians would return who were pursuing the mysterious old man and the maidens. But it was not so. They were kept in captivity many days.

One night while they were lying in their wigwam, but neither of them were sleeping—their minds were too troubled for that, the curtain of the wigwam was pushed aside and somebody entered.

"What cut-throat is that?" asked Kingsley as the figure approached.

"It is me, Bodgers. Don't speak so loud or we will all have our throats cut."

This was whispered in a very low tone. The others crept near him and inquired what his business was at that hour of the night.

"My business is stated in a few words," whispered Fred. "I am tired of married life and am going to elope."

"I don't wonder, my dear fellow," said Mr. Righter. "How many wives have you?"

"Five dirty squaws."

"Oh Moses! I don't wonder you want to get rid of them?"

"I can stand it no longer," said Fred. "Them squaws get worse and worse. They have nearly hugged me to death to-night."

"How did you get clear of them?"

"Why they have all hugged themselves to sleep, so I got off from them. Being an Indian the red devils let me go where I please, and I am going straight to the nearest settlement and raise volunteers, and then come

out here and rescue you fellows. You may depend on me."

The men thanked the honest fellow, and after a few words he departed with a gay heart, for he felt he was free from a dreadful captivity.

They put great confidence in Fred's promise, and waited patiently for him to put them in execution.

But days passed and their rescuers had not come yet.

At last, one night, when all the inhabitants of the Indian village were peacefully sleeping, a dreadful noise of the explosion of fire-arms was heard.

The Indians were quickly up, and arming themselves.

They knew the whites had entered their camp while they were unsuspecting danger, and they prepared to meet them.

But they were too late. The whites, though greatly in the minority, in point of numbers, had the advantage of the surprise.

The Indians soon found their village was being consumed by flames for their enemies had fired it, and they were compelled to flee, leaving everything of value behind them. That is, most of the Indians fled in great terror, though a few remained and fought valiantly, dying every inch of ground they retreated over, with their blood.

Among these latter, who remained and fought was Gibson. The rest of his companions had fled, but he remained and fought with the bravest of the braves.

There was one of the whites whom Gibson singled out as his opponent. This was a tall man, who wore a long hunter's frock. Gibson recognized him as the one who had carried the girls off when they were being tortured at the stake, and the one who had formerly been the Indians' prisoner.

"Now, you infernal being, I have found you at last," cried Gibson, as he rushed towards the hermit. Demon or no demon, I'll bury my knife in your breast."

He would have executed his threat. His knife was raised aloft, then descended with fearful velocity. But it was harmless.

By a powerful blow with his knife, the hermit sent the knife of the other whirling through the air. Then Gibson was at his mercy. But the hermit showed no mer-

cy, and the renegade was laid stretched dead at his feet.

A small brook passed the spot where he fell, and the dead man's head lay in its waters.

Gibson had been the last to resist. The others had fled, and the whites were the possessors of the field.

In the confusion of the battle the prisoners had escaped. Now they joined their friends and rescuers. Kingsley soon recognized many of the men, and among the others, Frederick Bodgers.

"I have kept my word, you see," said that worthy, approaching Kingsley, "but you mustn't thank me too much, for that devil of a hunter has more to do in the rescue than I have. I never saw such a man. He's everywhere at once."

When the morning dawned, it found the white men still possessors of the destroyed Indian village.

The whole party proceeded to the hermit's cave.

The girls had amused themselves during their host's absence by examining the curious contents of the underground abode. The place seemed to be well stocked with provisions and many other necessities of life, and besides these there were many chemical preparations that the girl did not know the use of; curious shaped lanterns, all manner of firearms and ammunition, skeleton skulls, and in fact every curious thing that their curious owner could collect around him.

Then there were implements of magic, such as Julia had seen used at exhibitions in great cities, and the young lady was not long in coming to the conclusion that their unknown friend was a conjurer.

One of the men had gone to a house at some distance, where some women resided, and borrowed female apparel for the girls. When he returned and the young ladies were again clothed in the proper dress of their sex, it was proposed that they should be escorted to the light house. A wagon was on hand to convey them, and several hundred armed men were on hand to escort them on their journey.

"So they all, with the exception of the hermit, bent their steps toward the light house. The hermit made an excuse for not accompanying them at present, but promised to join them shortly.

While they are on their journey we will watch the hermit's actions a while.

After the others had left him the hermit descended into the cavern, then supplied himself with firearms and a bountiful supply of provisions.

The hermit was bent on a journey.

He retraced the steps that had led him from the Indian encampment a short time before.

When he reached the encampment—or rather where the encampment had been, he found it as they had left a mass of ruins.

The Indians as yet had not returned to bury their dead.

The ground was still strewn with the lifeless bodies of the fallen savages.

The hermit paid but little attention to these sights, however, but eagerly searched for the spot where he had slain Gibson.

He soon found it. The body was still there, and the head was still resting in the brook.

The water had washed the paint from the face, revealing the natural color of the renegade.

The hunter gazed intently at the dead man's features, and he recognized them.

The object of his journey was accomplished.

He bent sorrowfully over the dead man and moaned:

"My worst fears are realized. It was a curse sent by Heaven in revenge of my bad deeds that my hand should slay my son. My son, my son, my poor murdered boy, your father at least weeps over your corpse."

And his tears bore evidence of his sorrow,

CHAPTER XIII.

WHO GOT THE FORTUNE.

GEORGE BRAINARD and Fetters stood on the great stone step of the lighthouse kitchen, scanning, with intense wonder, a procession that approached them.

"You may shoot me," said George, at last, "if I do not believe it is our long-lost friends coming back, escorted by soldiers. Yes, I am sure of it. I recognize Kingsley in the wagon. And there are two females. Would that Rebecca was one of them! But no! that is too much to hope."

"Thar's no use talkin' that way, old fellar," said Fetters, "good luck often comes when we're not expecting it."

"I do believe you're right," said George, who had still continued to gaze intently into the wagon. "See the women wave their handkerchiefs. I recognize her now. It is Rebecca. Rebecca's coming back! huzza! Rebecca's coming back!"

Before George Fetters could utter a cry, or even a squeak, that modest young gentleman found himself clasped in the arms of the other.

"Confound you," cried Fetters, "do you take me for a gal. Keep off your paws till the females arrive."

On the whole, Brainard concluded this was very sensible advice, so he released the persecuted Fetters, and ran down the road to meet the wagons.

Our modest pen forbids to record the many words of

endearment that were uttered by the lovers, when George jumped into the wagon and folded Rebecca to his breast for the first time in many months. We will only say there was not a dry eye in the wagon, and the eyes of those outside showed strong symptoms of water.

Of course Julia Richter could not keep her tongue still, but went on at a rapid rate, telling how her lover had caressed her once on a time.

The house was reached, and the party alighted from the wagon. The leader of the escort, with his men, were invited into the house, to partake of some of George Brainard's cooking, and they declared it to be excellent.

"Now, I will take the liberty of offering you some advice," said the leader, to Kingsley: "If I was you, and possessed so handsome a daughter, I would remove her from this lonely and dangerous place."

"I intend to do something far better than that," said Kingsley, smiling. "I shall give her to this good young man, who so longs to protect her."

And he took Rebecca's hand and Brainard's hand and united them.

"And I will try to prove worthy of her," said George.

"I wish the marriage was to come off directly," said the leader of their escort. "I am sure you can find no more interested spectators than my men and I. You don't know how we feel for the young lady, after we have had a hand in rescuing her from those red devils."

"I am sure I wish I could accommodate you," said George. "I am willing to be married at any moment, but my dear Rebecca here would object, and then we have neither a parson nor a magistrate on hand."

"Oh, if it is a magistrate you want," said a fat member of their rescuers advancing from the step where he had been standing and overheard the conversation. "I think I can accommodate you. I will marry you in a twinkling."

Should they accept the magistrate's proposal? As already stated George Brainard was willing but Rebecca was the main one to question.

The maiden at first refused. George coaxed and succeeded.

So the magistrate was told to proceed with the wedding.

The men outside on hearing what was to happen all but deafened each other with their loud cheers.

"Pshaw! I wouldn't mind them, my dear," said Julia, as she drew near her friend. "Let them cheer. It will do them good. I only wish some handsome fellow would offer to marry me. I'd accept him on the spot."

Now it happened Fred Bodgers was standing in the room, and Fred overheard the remark. It will be remembered how Fred had escaped from the five persecuting squaws, and the reader will know Fred again considered himself again a marrying man.

So when Julia made this tempting offer, Fred said to himself:

"Here is a chance for you old boy to secure a rich and handsome girl."

Whatever Fred's other faults were, modesty was not one of them. He determined to be the handsome fellow that made the proposal.

So advancing to the young lady he inquired in his most captivating manner:

"Was you in earnest when you spoke those words a few moments ago?"

Julia stared at him with her laughing eyes taking in his form in her glance from head to foot.

"Of course I was in earnest," she said with such a sweet smile, "you don't suppose I could speak anything but the truth, do you?"

Fred did not reply what he thought but threw himself at Julia's feet and exclaimed:

"Then behold at your feet one who has long adored you, but who was too scary to make his love known because your father is rich and I am as poor as a rat. Will you be my wife?"

"Hoity, toity! what does this mean?" inquired Mr. Righter coming forward.

"It means, papa," said Julia, "that the young man wants to marry me."

"Get up, you rascal, get up," said the old gentleman. "How dare you?"

"Now papa, you just let him alone."

"If the young man does love me, I am sure it is my

affair and not yours. I promised to accept the first handsome man that proposed, and I accept this one."

"You do?" cried Fred, springing to his feet; "oh speak those words again."

"I accept you as a husband," said Julia, firmly.

Fred spoke no word in reply, but he performed a gallant act. He hugged Julia till there was scarcely any breath left in her sweet little body.

Fred had served a good apprenticeship at hugging with his Five Indian squaws, so he was quite skilful at it.

"Can I believe my eyes?" said Mr. R., rubbing them.

"Are you really going to marry this fellow?"

"Why not, Papa?"

"But he is not at all handsome."

"Neither are you, papa, but he is fat, and I do so love fat men."

"Well, it does you honor, my daughter," said the old gentleman, who, it will be remembered, was stout himself.

Then turning to Bodgers, he took his hand and addressed him.

"My son, your flesh has saved you. At first I cursed, but now I bless you. I accept you as my son-in-law, and I sincerely hope you will raise a family as fat as yourself."

"I'll do my best," said Fred, as he took the hand of the blushing Julia.

It was arranged that Julia and Fred should be the first couple married. They stood up gallantly before the burly magistrate, as he pronounced the words that made them man and wife.

The good-hearted Vigilance Committee that were stationed in the yard, on hearing of the nuptials, raised a great shout of joy, and every man of them felt the better for it.

"Now, darling," said George to Rebecca, "I suppose our turn has come."

"But I would rather wait," said Rebecca.

"Why?" inquired George, "why wait, when our friends have set us so good an example."

"Because I had set my heart on having a certain person at my wedding, and he is not present."

"Who is that person?"

"The noble-hearted hunter, or the Invisible Hermit, as some call him. The man who has risked his life so many times to save me from danger."

"You need delay the wedding no longer then," said a man who was standing near the door, "for the Invisible Hermit is coming this way."

True enough, the hermit was coming, and with rapid paces too. He entered the house, where he was warmly greeted by the inmates.

On being told of the wedding that was about to be consummated, he evinced considerable pleasure, and expressed a desire that the ceremonies should proceed.

So George and Rebecca stood before the magistrate and were made man and wife.

"I suppose now is the time to give the presents," said the hermit. "Unluckily I am too poor to present a very costly one, but I have something here that may be of some interest to the bride."

While he was yet speaking he handed her a sealed letter.

Before she had time to utter a word of thanks the hermit had passed from the house and was walking rapidly toward the mountains.

They opened the letter, and from its folds dropped a medal. George picked it up and handed it to Rebecca, and she recognized it as the counterpart of the medal that had been given Kingsley years before when she was so mysteriously rescued from a watery grave.

The secret of a lifetime was revealed.

The mysterious being who had so faithfully watched over her destinies and who had risked his life so many times on her account was her father.

The letter told the story.

It was neatly written in manuscript style, and was headed:

"THE STORY OF A LIFE."

"My name is James Gibson. By profession I am a conjurer. I have not been able to practice my profession for many years by a calamity that happened to me and has been the blight of my life.

"Twenty years ago I was prosperous and happy. To-

day I am living more the life of a wild beast than that of a human being. What caused this great change can be told in one word 'murder.'

"Twenty years ago I was living in New York City. I had a profitable engagement in that city, and I owned a home there that was made happy by the presence of a wife and children.

"My wife, before she married me, had belonged to the upper class of society, and after marriage, though her own family turned coldly from her (disliking my circumstances), she still retained many friends who belonged to the haughty upper class.

"Amongst this aristocratic class of her friends figured a man named Layman. He was a doctor and through his profession he became quite intimate with my wife. Besides this he had been a suitor of hers before marriage. He was a gay, dashing, fellow and I had reason to be jealous of him.

"My jealousy soon increased. There was a reason for it, but this part of the history is unpleasant. Suffice it to say the villain made my once happy home a hell upon earth to me.

"I determined on some sort of revenge. The determination was at first undefined, but it began to take shape as time advanced.

"One cold December day I had business that called me to a neighboring city. I did not return until late in the evening. As I was returning to my home through the dreary streets of the city, and while I was thinking of my wrongs, I discovered the destroyer of the peace of my home walking on unsuspectingly a few paces in front. I was armed with a dangerous knife, and I could not restrain the temptation I felt to kill him then and there. I crept up to him. He was still unsuspecting, and before he could utter even a cry I had laid him dead at my feet.

"I immediately returned to the city that I had visited the day before. By so doing I escaped detection, for it

was thought that I was absent on the night of the murder.

"I escaped punishment by men, but not by my conscience. For two years I could scarcely sleep for the thought of the terrible deed. Yet for two years I kept the terrible secret. At the end of that time I revealed it.

"I made a confidant of my wife. I loved her and I deeply trusted her, in spite of circumstances that occurred, for I had blamed, altogether, her paramour.

"On the night on which I entrusted my terrible secret to her, she looked sweeter and more innocent than ever. She promised she would faithfully keep my secret, and in an hour afterwards I knew how faithfully she had kept it.

"She was all deceit; an incarnate devil lurked beneath that angelic look of hers. She had not known my secret over an hour before she set the officers of the law on my track. But I escaped them bravely. By a perilous leap, that they dare not attempt, I escaped from their clutches.


"For weeks I lurked about the great city, and then I heard of her marriage to another man.

"I had two children at this time. One was a boy named George, and the other was a girl, much smaller, and named Rebecca. My wife's father took the boy, after my betrayal, while my wife retained the little girl.

"One of my lurking places was along the wharves of that great city. In the summer I often spent the night on these wharves.

"One night, while lying on the wharf, I discovered a woman and a child approaching the water's edge. The woman's intention was plain. She was intent on suicide, and in all probability was going to drown the innocent by her side.

"Before I had time to stop her she had leaped overboard, dragging the child with her. I leaped after them. I saved the child, but the woman I was unable to save.



"I brought the child to the wharf and under a neighboring lamp I recognized her as my own.

"The rest need not be told. The one who this story was written for, no doubt knows her history since that night. As for myself, I had determined to be near my child, and that determination I have carried out. While she lived in New York with him who had volunteered to protect her, I kept near her. When they came to California I followed them here.

"The story is told, and my mission on earth is done. I have revealed myself to my daughter, and pray she will be constant to the man she has married, for happiness and virtue go hand in hand. As for me—she will never see or hear of me again.

The letter bore his signature.

"Well, let his life be a warning to all of us," said Mr. Righter, "and to you, especially, Bodgers. "But this letter reminds me of my duty. We know now that George Gibson is dead, so he can't claim the fortune, and we know Rebecca Brainard is his sister, and as the next relative, she can claim the fortune. My dear, allow me to congratulate you."

Yes, Rebecca was the heiress of the large fortune that her brother had spurned.

And after some delay in the courts she received it—every dollar of it.

But not before she had removed to New York, where she was residing in a large brown stone house her husband had bought on the Fifth Avenue.

They lived very pleasantly in this house. Maybe the reason was, because they had pleasant neighbors. Mr. and Mrs. Bodgers were their neighbors, and Mr. Righter, who resided with his son-in law.

Kingsley did not remove to New York and live with Rebecca and her husband, though they strongly urged him to do so. He had become attached to the lighthouse, and he did not like to leave it. So he and the

good-natured George Feters (who had become quite fond of Kingsley) continued to live there together, and a very happy life they led.

But a circumstance occurred that served to check their happiness in some degree.

It was the suicide of the hermit.

He had thrown himself over a ledge of steep rocks, and his mangled body was found on the stony ground many feet below.

His mission was accomplished. His daughter was safe now, and married to a man who loved her. So the wretched being, imagining that he had nothing more to live for, had destroyed himself, by leaping from the very cliff, where, on one memorable night his Red Light had burned so brightly.

THE END.

Now is the Time !!

SUBSCRIBE WITHOUT DELAY FOR

THE FIRESIDE COMPANION,

The Best, Neatest, Highest-toned, and Most Generally Interesting FAMILY STORY PAPER IN AMERICA. THE FIRESIDE COMPANION though only just about to enter into its fourth year of publication, is recognized all over the world, as one of the

MOST BRILLIANT, DASHING, ENTERTAINING, AND VALUABLE JOURNALS IN EXISTENCE. And for the following reasons:

THE FIRESIDE COMPANION contains **SPLENDID CONTINUED STORIES, FINE POETRY, SENSATIONAL and SENTIMENTAL SKETCHES, INTERESTING ANECDOTES,** and such a **RARE COMBINATION** of **USEFUL FACTS, WIT, and HUMOR,** and other entertaining matter, that goes to form a par excellence for the Family Circle. It has **SELDOM BEEN EQUALLED, NEVER SURPASSED!** Among the other striking features of the **FIRESIDE COMPANION,** are its **READING FOR LITTLE FOLKS,** and **CORRESPONDENTS' COLUMN,** which are under the management of some of the **MOST LEARNED, WITTY, and EXPERIENCED WRITERS** of the **DAY,** and alone worth double the cost of the paper.

The Editorials are, likewise, **First Class,** the **Jokes** as laughable as people can stand without losing their Buttons, The **Illustrations** by **Celebrated Artists,** The **Sketches** of the **Most Varied, Thrilling, and Interesting Character,** and, therefore, it may be seen at a glance that

The Fireside Companion

must prove a **Highly Welcome Visitor** in every family in the land. Among the more conspicuous writers for **THE FIRESIDE COMPANION,** are the following celebrated names:

MRS SUMNER HAYDEN,
LUCY RANDALL COMFORT,
LARA PERCY,
TRACE MORTIMER,
ADAME DE MARTHA,
EVA EVERGREEN,
REBECCA FORBES,
BRITOMARTE,
HIRLEY BROWNE,

LESLIE THORNE,
EVA ALICE,
MARY J. WINES,
MAJOR ALMYR,
CAPT. MAYNE REED,
CAPT. CARLETON,
JOHN F. COWAN,
KENWARD PHILP,
ROGER STARBUCK,

GEORGE S. AIKEN,
CORRY O'LANUS,
J. W. MACKAY,
JOHN H. NEVINS,
DR. JUPITER PABON,
HARRY HAZLETON,
THE "OLD TRAPPER,"
RICHARD FENWICK,
AUGUSTIN DALY.

While the above brilliant array of Authors guarantees a **Feast of Useful and charming reading,** fit for the most fastidious epicure, we are continually on the watch for any New Star that may appear in the **Literary Firmament.** In short, no expense will be spared to keep **THE FIRESIDE COMPANION** fully "**UP TO THE AGE,**" and what it purports to be in every respect—A **FIRST-CLASS, FAMILY PAPER.** We are about to publish several **Stories of Wonderful Power and interest—Stories** that are certain to create a sensation in the reading world—therefore, do not miss the opportunity, but *order the paper at once.*

TAKE SPECIAL NOTICE.—THE FIRESIDE COMPANION, for one year, will furnish **TWO THOUSAND AND EIGHTY COLUMNS**—about **Fifty Good-Sized Volumes**—a fact well worthy of remembrance by all who desire **Quantity as well as Quality** for their money.

SPECIMEN COPIES SENT FREE.

TERMS TO SUBSCRIBERS.

ONE COPY FOR ONE YEAR	\$ 3.00.
FOUR COPIES " " " " " " " " " "	10.00.
NINE " " " " " " " " " "	20.00.

Persons getting up Clubs, can afterwards add single copies at \$2.50 each. All letters must be addressed to

GEORGE MUNRO,
84 BEEKMAN ST., N. Y.

P. O. BOX 5657.

PERSONS WISHING BOOKS WILL PLEASE ORDER MUNRO'S, AND
SEE THAT MUNRO IS ON THE COVER.

MUNRO'S TEN CENT NOVELS.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 The Hunters | 69 Stranger's Grave [Teller | 137 Hunter's Secret |
| 2 The Trapper's Retreat | 70 Mad Nancy, the Fortune | 138 Rival Capt'ns, double No |
| 3 The Patriot Highwayman | 71 Long Rifle Hunter | 139 Little Foot Trapper |
| 4 Fugitives of the Mountains | 72 Wooden-Legged Spy | 140 The Wild Ride |
| 5 The Track of Fire | 73 Long Legs, the Squatter | 141 Roving Dick Hunter |
| 6 The Man Eaters | 74 Black Prophet | 142 Fighting Nat |
| 7 Charlotte Temple | 75 Old Norte, the Hunter | 143 Hunter of Black Hills |
| 8 The Death Face | 76 Tiger Eye | 144 The Indian Spirit |
| 9 The Indian Slayer | 77 Revolutionary Joe | 145 Iron-handed Trapper |
| 10 The Turtle Catcher | 78 Jack, the Buffalo Catcher | 146 Hunters and Redskins |
| 11 The Hunter's Triumph | 79 Tom Turbin, Trapper | 147 The Trapper's Cave |
| 12 The Ocean Rovers | 80 Scout of St. Lawrence | 148 Painted Paleface |
| 13 The Tory Outwitted | 81 Leather Legs | 149 Billy Bowlegs |
| 14 Zeke Sternum | 82 Bloody Brook | 150 Owl Face, the Pawnee |
| 15 The Scourge of the Seas | 83 Wolf-Slayer | 151 Small-pox Dave |
| 16 The Captive Maiden | 84 Long Bob | 152 The Watchful Hunter |
| 17 Long Legged Joe | 85 Cooney Bush [ry Men | 153 Fire Cloud |
| 18 Wild Scout of the M't'ns | 86 Robin Hood and his Mer- | 154 Frontier Hunter |
| 19 The Forest Lodge | 87 Spy of the Delaware | 155 Hunter Scouts |
| 20 The Rollicking Rangers | 88 "Old Kit," the Scout | 156 The Silent Trapper |
| 21 Rattlesnake Dick | 89 Hank Wiggins, Esq., | 157 The Shadow Scout |
| 22 Ricketty Tom the Rover | 90 Spider Legs | 158 Lantern-jawed Bob |
| 23 The Imps of the Prairie | 91 Old Trapper's Pride | 159 The Shawnee Witch |
| 24 The Robber's Terror | 92 Marksman, the Hunter | 160 Trapper Joe |
| 25 Joe, the "Sarpint" | 93 Grizzly Jake | 161 The Mountain Demon |
| 26 Lightfoot, the Scout | 94 Spotted Dan | 162 Old Ben Woolley |
| 27 Giant Spy of Bunker Hill | 95 The Bloody Footprint | 163 The Red Sprite |
| 28 Scar Chief the Wild Half- | 96 Old Rube, the Trailer | 164 Brimstone Jake |
| 29 Squint-Eyed Bob [Breed | 97 Big Mouthed Trapper | 165 The Demon Cruiser |
| 30 Snaky Snodgrass | 98 Panther Jack [dit Miller | 166 The Trapper's Bride |
| 31 Rolling Thunder | 99 Snake Eye; or, the Ban- | 167 Wapawkaneta |
| 32 Heavy Hatchet the Scout | 100 Old Nick of the Swamp | 168 The White Arrow |
| 33 Sly Sam, the Quaker Spy | 101 Gamecock of the Santee | 169 White Haired Hunter |
| 34 Three Daring Trappers | 102 Old Zeke | 170 Yellow Jake |
| 35 The Fatal Marksman | 103 Dog-Face | 171 The Wizard Trapper |
| 36 Eagle Eyed Zeke | 104 Sharp Snout | 172 War Trail of the Semi- |
| 37 Big Rifle Nick | 105 Tuscaloosa Sam | 173 The River-Wolf [noles |
| 38 The Bold Scalp Hunter | 106 Slim Jim | 174 Red Hand |
| 39 The Tory Spy | 107 Red Rattlesnake | 175 Black Plume |
| 40 Prairie Jake | 108 Black Sampson | 176 The Leaping Panther |
| 41 Wealth and Beauty | 109 Ugly Ike | 177 The Silver Seekers |
| 42 The Rover of the Forest | 110 Squatty Dick | 178 Zip Trimble |
| 43 The Giant of the Woods | 111 Hardskull, the Avenger | 179 Queen Eagle |
| 44 The Crazy Trapper | 112 Turkey Foot | 180 Old Nathan Piper |
| 45 Lion-Hearted Hunter | 113 Hawk Eye, the Hunter | 181 The Walking Bear |
| 46 Old Jim of the Woods | 114 Madman of the Oconto | 182 The Arkansas Traveler |
| 47 Mad Mike | 115 Dave Bunker | 183 Fugitives of the Chatta- |
| 48 White Headed Hunter | 116 Blazing Arrow | 184 Chewacho [the chog- |
| 49 Big Hearted Joe | 117 Hickory Jack | 185 The Rough Ranger |
| 50 The Scout of Long Island | 118 Twin Trappers | 186 The Treasure Cave |
| 51 Silverheels the Delaware | 119 Hiding Tom | 187 The Swamp Robbers |
| 52 Black Bill, the Trapper | 120 Bloody Wolf | 188 Gorilla Zeke |
| 53 Red Men of the Woods | 121 Long-Headed Mike | 189 Brette, the Death Sho |
| 54 Grim Dick, the Robber | 122 Thunder-Cloud | 190 Black Ralph |
| 55 Indian Queen's Revenge | 123 Harold of the Hills | 191 Rocky Mount'n Hunt |
| 56 Old Scout of the Cave | 124 Texas Joe [Mayne Reid | 192 Club Foot; or, Spy of t |
| 57 Big Snake, the Huren | 125 Creole Forger, by Capt. | 193 Rube the Scalper [Colo |
| 58 Mex. Joe, Snake Charm'r | 126 Red Star of the Semi- | 194 Spectre of the Prairie |
| 59 Steady Hand the Sharp- | 127 Bullet-Head [noles | 195 Lasso Jack |
| 60 Gipsy Jack [Shooter | 128 Hunter Zeb | 196 The Half-Breed |
| 61 The Scarlet Warrior | 129 Scout of the Sciota | 197 The King of the Plain |
| 62 The Scout of Tippecanoe | 130 Forest Hunters | 198 The Dakotah Chief |
| 63 Schinderhannes | 131 Mad Betsy | 199 Thunder Spirit |
| 64 The Bride of Wolf Glen | 132 Indian Stratagem | 200 The Southern Cross |
| 65 Buffalo Jack, the Trapper | 133 Pale-Face Indian | 201 The Spirit Hunter |
| 66 Scout of the Rio Grande | 134 White Savage | 202 Peleg Phelps |
| 67 Daring Backwoodsman | 135 Witch of the Swamp | 203 The Disguised Trappe |
| 68 Clumsy Foot | 136 Old Paul | 204 The Lost Dragons |

These Novels are the most popular books that have ever been published. The sales them may be counted by Tens of Millions. There is scarcely a Village, or Cabin on the Continent, where Munro's Ten Cent Novels are not as familiar as Household Words. Any dealer ordering 25 copies regular, or 200 assorted, can have his imprint them. They are for sale by all Newsdealers, and sent, postage paid, on receipt of 10 cents each.

GEORGE MUNRO, Publisher, 84 Beekman St., N.